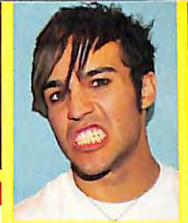


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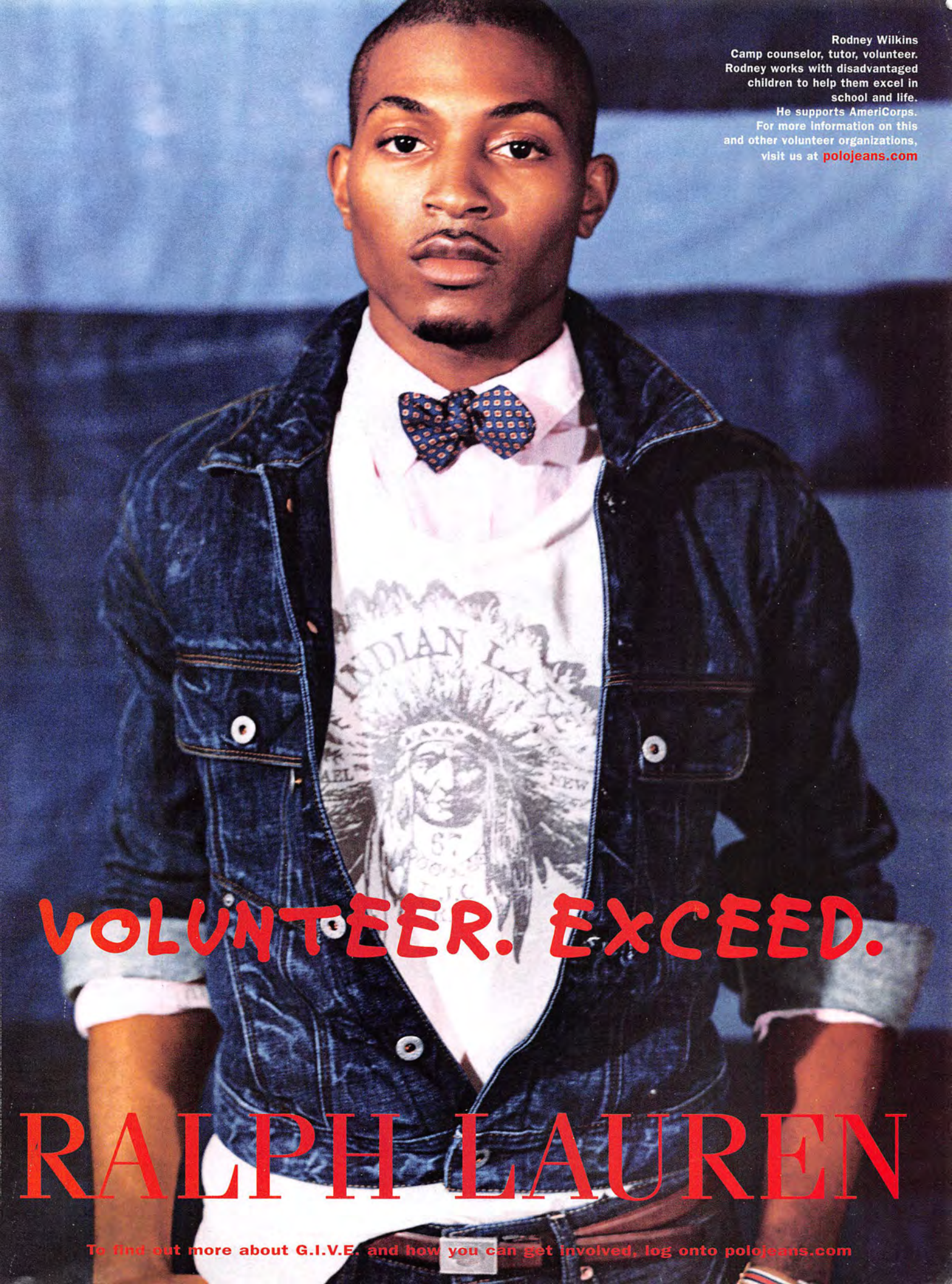


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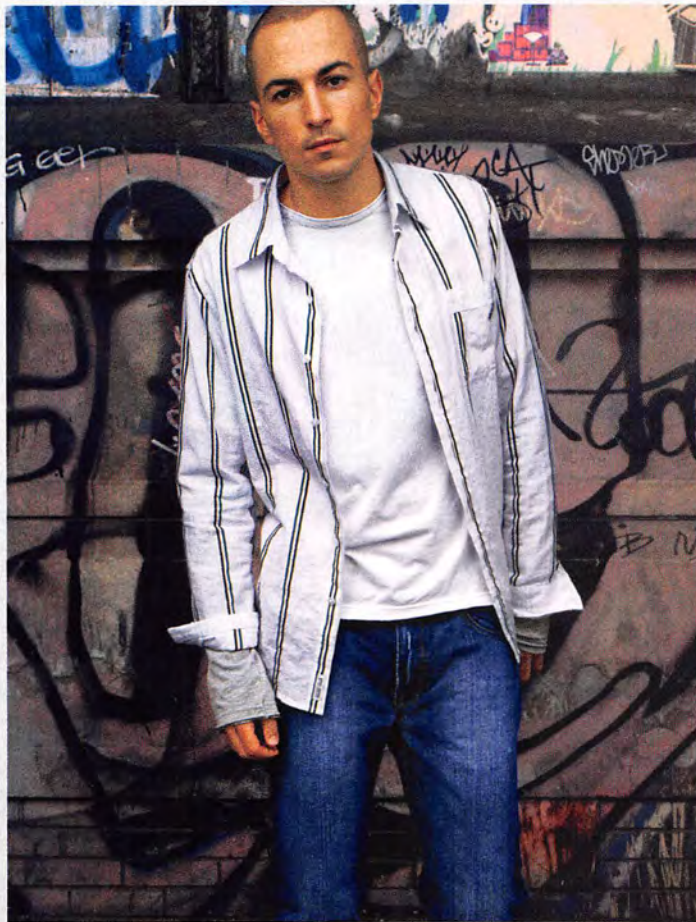


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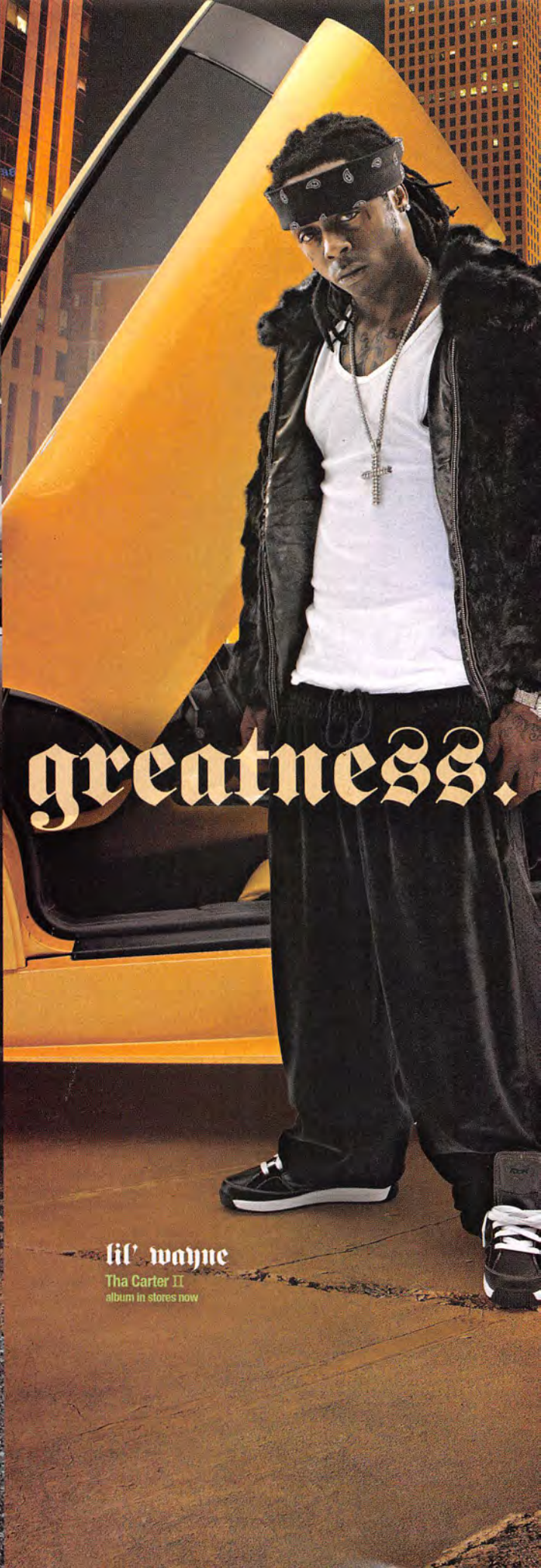
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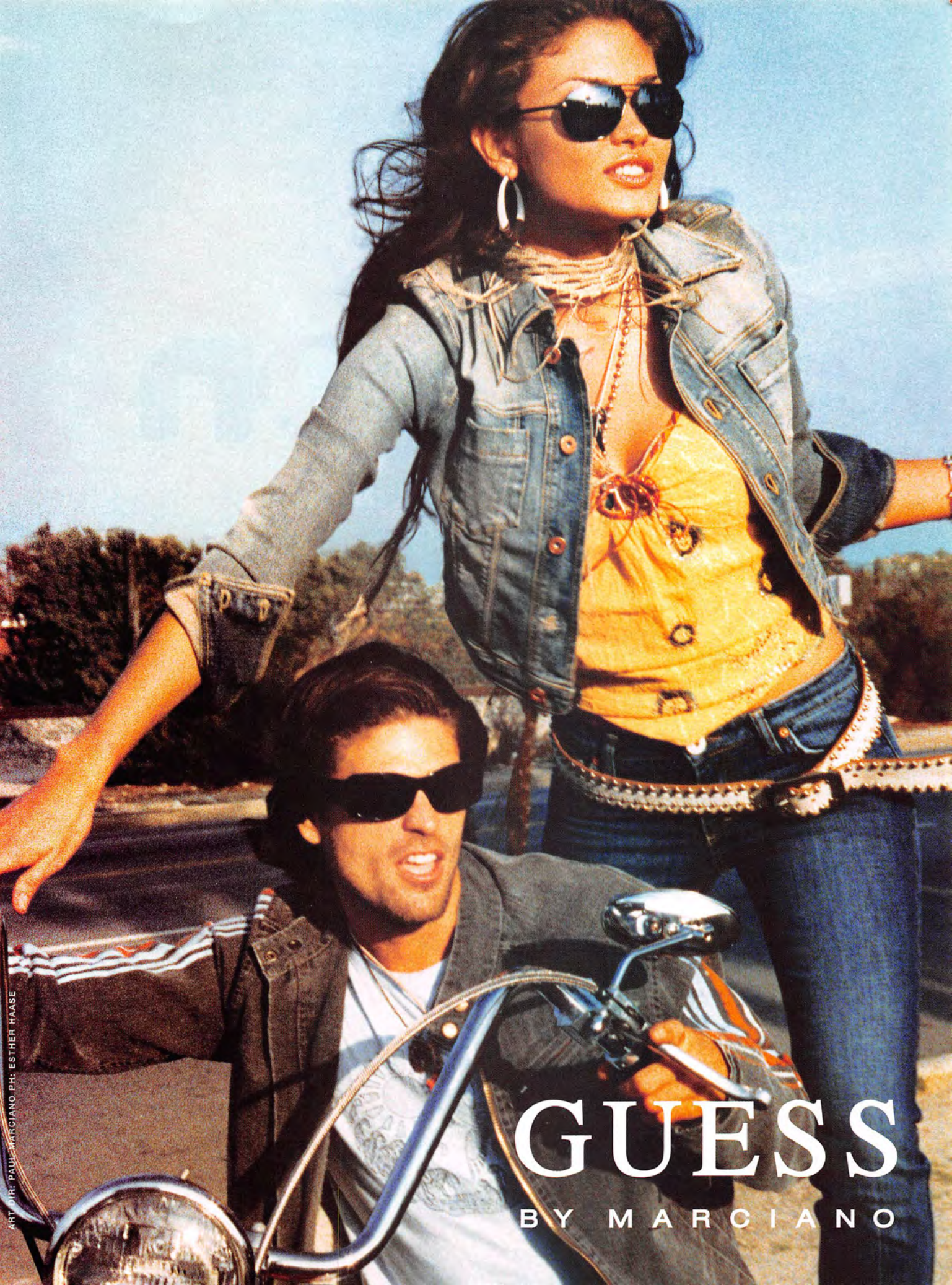
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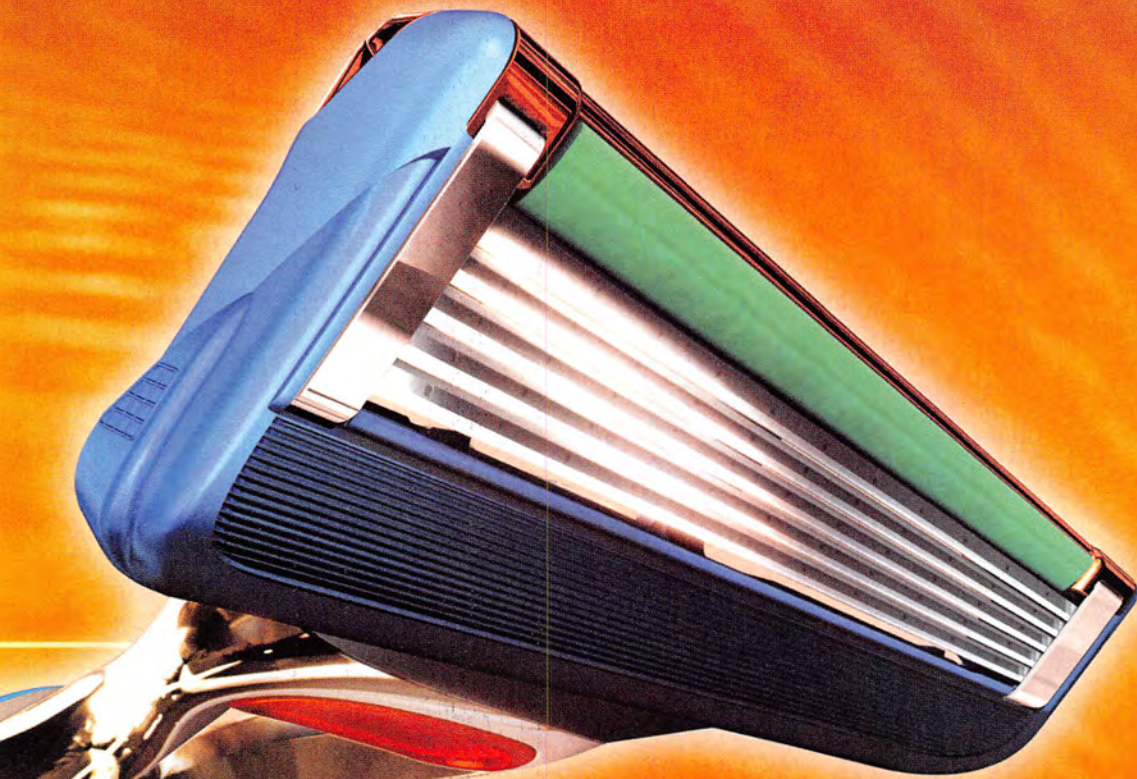
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82

"I HAD A CONVERSATION WITH GOD."

FERGIE

BLENDER

MARCH 2006

82 THE BLACK EYED PEAS

Love 'em or hate 'em, the Peas are one of the biggest hip-hop-no, make that one of the biggest *pop* acts in the world today. To get there they had to endure poverty, drug addiction and occasional bouts of incontinence.

88 MIRANDA LAMBERT

The breakout *Nashville Star* singer is a Texas good ol' gal who likes hunting, drinking beer, listening to Merle Haggard—and singing songs about setting her ex-boyfriends on fire.

94 \$848: YELLOWCARD

In an affront to all things sex, drugs and rock & roll, the SoCal emo stars blow *Blender's* cash on raw food and personal trainers.

96 STYLE '06

What do Madonna, Jessica Alba and hundreds of hipper-than-thou club kids have in common? Safe passage past the velvet rope at MisShapes, New York's most stylish dance party. Plus: Jeans and sneakers that redefine the classic rock & roll getup.



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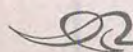
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"I WISH I DIDN'T LIKE BEER SO MUCH."

MIRANDA LAMBERT

ROBERT MAXWELL

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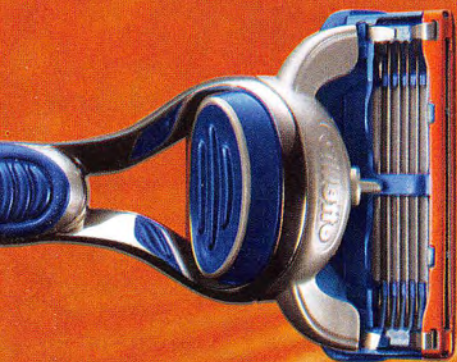
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GUILT FREE!

True to your Kelly Clarkson cover line ["America's Favorite Guilty Pleasure (Besides Puggles)," Jan./Feb.], I've been feeling guilty as hell about the fact that "Since U Been Gone" is one of my favorite songs of the year. Thank you, *Blender*, for making me feel better. If Bob Mould and Ted Leo can make public the fact that they like it, then I guess I can too. Plus, how bad can you feel about liking a track by someone whose own "favorite song of all time" is AC/DC's "You Shook Me All Night Long"?

PAUL FRAMPERIN, CARLTON, AL

WE ARE ALL ON RIVERS CUOMO'S ASS

As big a fan as I am of Rivers Cuomo, he does seem to be a moron for not considering the idea that a song called "We Are All on Drugs" might be misinterpreted [Dear Superstar, Jan./Feb.]. He's right about it being a good rock jam, though.

MARK MANDEVILLE, HELENA, GA

TALKING TURKEY

Re Kanye West's decision to write a song about turkey jerky because it has a funny name ["Backstage Scrapbook: We're With the Band," Jan./Feb.]: I guess all those people who think he could rap a list of ingredients and still sound cool will find out if they're right.

MATT LICEA, OREFIELD, PA

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PAIGE MARIE
THE DOG

18 _ "A white suit when I'm getting divorced/A black suit at the funeral home."



Kanye West regrets eating the tuna tartare from the craft services table.

BILLY, BE A HERO!

I always knew you *Blender* editors had good taste—but it's nice to find out that us readers do too. I think we deserve a big "Hoorah!" for the year-end poll [Jan./Feb.] and for voting the mighty Billie Joe Armstrong Hero of the Year.

ALISON MARTEN, BALTIMORE

Yes, indeed: Hoorah!

TOMMY LEE OR KELLY C.?

Being chased by adoring, screaming underage girls, getting tattoos with members of rock bands and drinking the night away? Are you sure that was clean-cut *American Idol* winner Kelly Clarkson in your cover story, or was it Tommy Lee? Color me impressed!

RON MCNEW, MAMARONECK, NY

DURST DIRT

Thanks for the interview with the surprisingly nice-seeming Fred Durst [Back Page, Jan./Feb.]. One thing though: Doesn't the CIA have better things to do than investigate the case of his missing sex tape?

ERIC GORMAN, GLEN ROCK, NJ

APPETITE FOR DESEGREGATION

I got it! The spine lyric for your Jan./Feb. issue ("Ah ha, hush that fuss, everybody move to the back of the bus") is from Outkast's song "Rosa Parks." I appreciate your recognizing the civil rights great's passing, but one thing: Did you have any qualms about quoting the song she took Outkast to court over?

MARIA QUAN, BAKERSFIELD, CA

FRED DURST, ARTISTE

I guess your back page lyric ["I love your friends, they're all so arty," Jan./Feb.], by Franz Ferdinand from "Do You Want To," was rather fitting, seeing as I think Fred Durst's a better artist than musician. Which isn't saying all that much.

TOR EUSTIS, YOUNGTOWN, AZ

GOD'S PLAYTHINGS

With regard to your "50 Dumbest Rock Star Extravagances" [December], I'm now convinced that God uses rock stars for amusement. That's the only way he/she/it lets them cough up cash for undeniably stupid shit. OK, I'll give them a break if they give some of their money to the less fortunate, but if they're just out spending money on girls and bling, their mama needs to slap some sense into them. Ask Hammer and go get an accountant.

JOE KEITT, VIA E-MAIL

FISHY BUSINESS

Freddie Mercury's fish died in a "bizarre gardening accident" ["50 Dumbest Rock Star Extravagances"]? Isn't that also how one of Spinal Tap's drummers died? Maybe gardening accidents are another misfortune to which rock stars are prone, like choking on vomit or marrying Heather Locklear.

SUZANNE MADDEN, JACKSONVILLE, NY

BLENDER HELPS OUT

With everything going on down here, trying to get our lives back together, imagine my excitement to receive my *Blender* for the first time since Katrina.

CHRISTIAN SANDER, FORMERLY OF NEW ORLEANS,
NOW OF LAPLACE, LA →



KEVIN CAN WAIT

People are always getting on Kevin Federline's case for not doing anything, but I think your "In da Doghouse!" [Jan./Feb.] shows that the Federmeister is one busy guy: dirty dancing with Ashlee Simpson, partying, renting videos, partying, uh ... growing his hair. What do people want? He's just one guy!

CHRISTIANA MERLIS, IRVINE, CA

HE'S NOT DUMB, BUT HE CAN'T UNDERSTAND

Reading your Almost Famous piece about Lola [Jan./Feb.], I can't believe that you missed the opportunity to crack wise about walking like a woman and talking like a man, after the Kinks song of the same name. Although judging by the accompanying photograph, I guess there's not much doubt about her gender.

SEAN LEE, SAN DIEGO, CA

Us "crack wise"? Never!

GETTING THE HUMP

When Mike Shinoda from Linkin Park was asked about the stupidest thing he's ever eaten [Do You Rock?, Jan./Feb.] and replied "camel," was he referring to the animal or the cigarette?

HAKAN ISHAR, ORLANDO, FL

Good question. But a better one is: Which would be stupider?

MISERY HATES COMPANY

Given Portia de Rossi's love for misery rock [for her Jan./Feb. My Music interview, the *Arrested Development* star chose CDs by Nick Cave, Radiohead and Morrissey, among others] and girlfriend Ellen DeGeneres's love for music you can dance to, is it possible that theirs will be the first celebrity relationship to break up due to "musical differences"?

JACKI SULLIVAN, ATLANTIC CITY, NJ

TOOTHY!

How refreshing that U2 only demand toothpicks when they play a show ["Backstage Scrapbook: We're With the Band"]. Well, that and about a gazillion bucks, I guess.

VINCE POLOPOLI, NEW YORK CITY

NOT SO SILENT ALARM

Sometimes you mystify me, *Blender*. You feature Bloc Party in your Almost Famous column [May] and give their album *Silent Alarm* three stars—and then leave them off your "50 Best CDs of 2005" list [Jan./Feb.]? You could at least have put their single "Banquet" on and taken off one version of "Since U Been Gone."

MOLLY GURTENSEN, DANVILLE, NH

SUPERFAN

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Elton John and Sharon Kalinoski



Keith Valcourt and Fiona Apple



Renard Jacobs and Kelly Clarkson



Chrissy Papadopolos and Jack White

APPETITE FOR SUGGESTION

I wish you would have an article in a future issue titled "Why we didn't include ..." in which you explain why you didn't include some essential items in your lists. For example, why not "We Are the World" in the "500 Greatest Songs Since You Were Born" list [October], and why not *The Wall*

in the list of the "100 Greatest Rock & Roll Movies" [November]? I think your readers would be intrigued to hear your thinking behind these omissions.

JEFF WEBB, PORTLAND, OR

Let's start now: *The Wall* didn't make the list because it kind of sucks. And "We Are the World" definitely does.

A MODEST PROPOSAL

My name's Patrick Stump and I sing in a band called Fall Out Boy. You put our song "Sugar We're Going Down" at No. 4 ["The 100 Greatest Songs of 2005," Jan./Feb.], and while I'm flattered, I have to disagree. Kanye released no less than 12 songs better than mine this year (including "Down and Out" by Cam'ron). Thanks.

PATRICK STUMP, CHICAGO



Boy in the bubble:
Fall Out Boy's
Patrick Stump.

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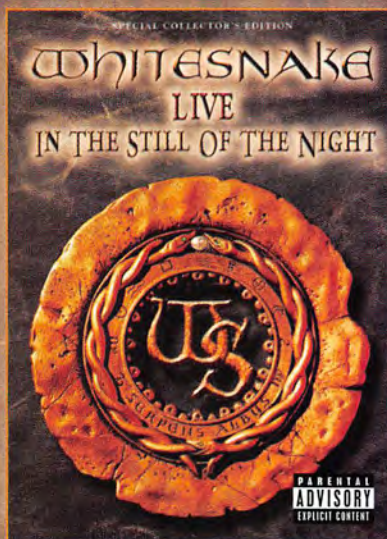
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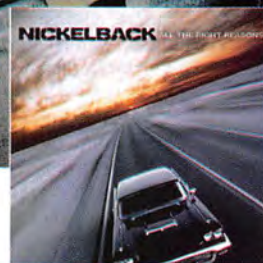
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A photograph of the four members of the band Nickelback standing against a dark blue background. They are wearing leather jackets and jeans. The band's name "NICKELBACK" is written in large, white, stylized letters across the middle of the image.

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➤ If you happened to be an MTV Europe contest winner last November, speeding from London towards New York aboard a chartered Boeing 757 with Korn, you might have had the odd experience of watching singer Jonathan Davis watch you watch his onscreen image watch his own voice boom from the glittering, metal-filled mouth of rapper Lil Jon as Korn's new "Twisted Transistor" video played on the plane's tiny dropdown screens.

"The idea for the video began as a joke," Davis confesses. "I was kidding around one day, saying that the only way Korn could get played on *TRL* was if we could turn ourselves into rappers, and the next thing you know, we had Snoop Dogg on the phone."

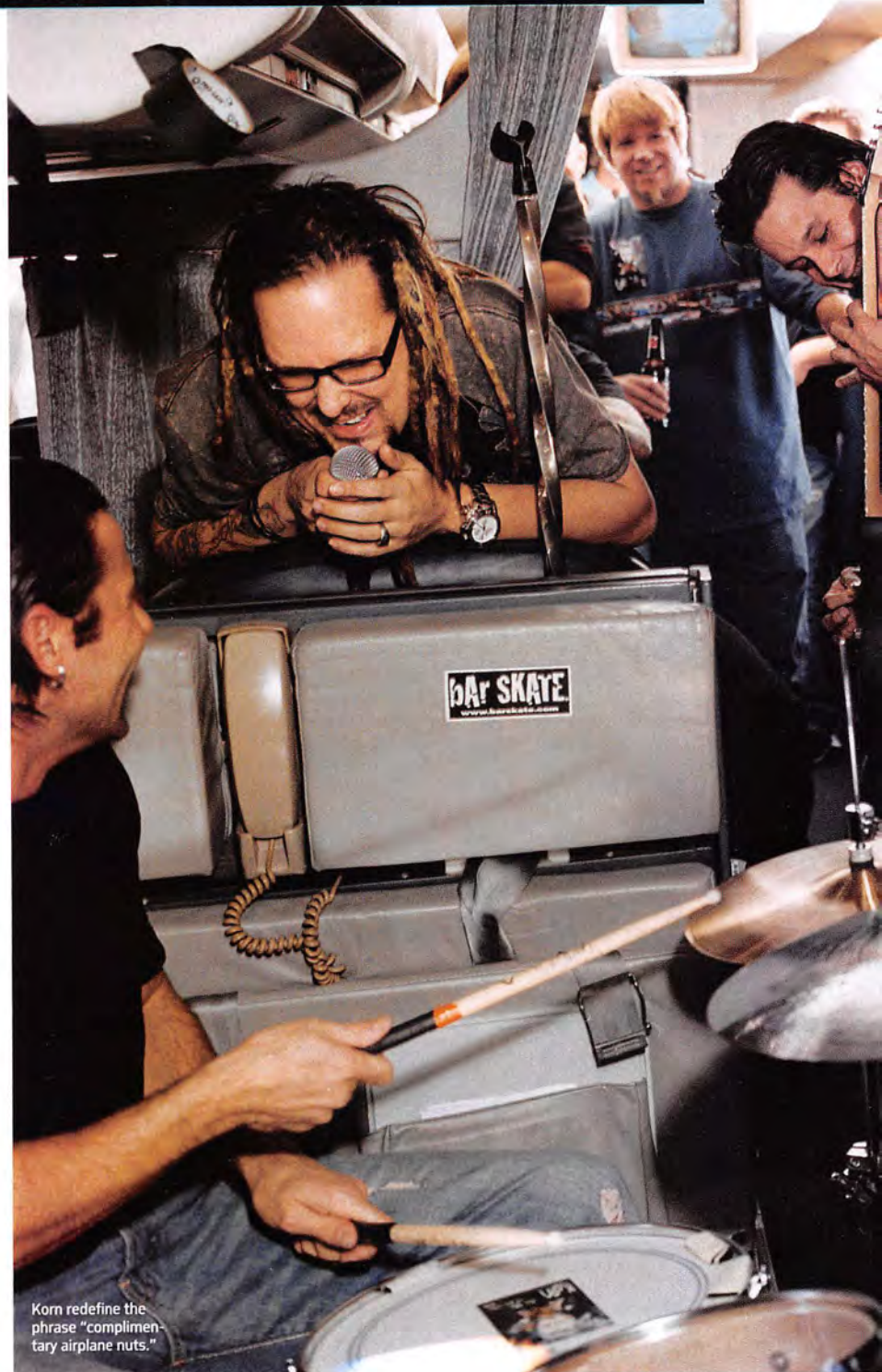
This airplane is a Noah's Ark of Euro fandom, populated by people from nine MTV-affiliated countries in Europe as well as eight American soldiers plucked from military bases in Germany and Italy.

"Absolute incred-eeble," says Carolina from Madrid.

"Unbelievable," says Kenneth from Denmark. "It is greatest day of my life."

A few degrees south of Greenland, at 37,000 feet, the members of the band plug into banks of battery-powered amps piled behind first class and rock through perhaps the only Korn set in history that could be appreciated without earplugs. So many fans shove up to the front of the airplane that *Blender* has visions of the jet plunging headfirst into the Atlantic. The vocal amp runs out of juice halfway through "Freak on a Leash," but Davis, who is performing bent over a beverage cart, starts singing through the airplane's P.A. It's a perfect effect: subversive and intimate in a way that rarely happens at sea-level concerts.

"That was fucking goofy, man," says the sweaty Davis, swabbing his braids with a towel. "We haven't done a show this primitive since we played at a lawnmower repair shop in Georgia." JONATHAN GOLD



Korn redefine the phrase "complimentary airplane nuts."



PHOTOGRAPHY BY NATHANIEL WELCH

HANDS FREE

MARIAH CAREY IS TOO BUSY TO HOLD HER OWN DRINK



Songbird and comeback queen Mariah Carey is known for living a pampered lifestyle, and once even had her Jack Russell driven 3,000 miles across the country by chauffeur.



But at a London in-store event for her Grammy-nominated *The Emancipation of Mimi*, disaster almost struck when the diva realized she was too busy to reach for a beverage.



Fortunately, the day was saved when an assistant transformed into Mariah's diligent human cupholder for the day.

26. "Money don't get everything it's true/But what it don't get I can't use/Give me money/Lotsa money."

NEWS ROUNDUP

KANYE WEST has reformed his anti-college views. Appearing at a Santa Monica high school, the rapper said, "It is true you can be successful without college, but this is a hard world ... and you want every advantage you can have."

JENNIFER ANISTON has given Xzibit props on his acting skills and personal demeanor, saying that her *Derailed* co-star was "a really good actor" and "one of the sweetest guys on the planet."

SNOOP DOGG has been hired as an executive producer at satellite radio network XM, providing creative direction for hip-hop channel The Rhyme. "I am truly excited," he said.

Salma Hayek directed a video for **PRINCE**'s first single off his latest record, *3121*. "Te Amo Corazón" was filmed in Marrakech and is available to download from Npgmusicclub.com.

WORD!



"JACK WHITE? HE LOOKS LIKE ZORRO ON DONUTS."

NOEL GALLAGHER



Janie's got a *haftorah*: Aerosmith and 50 Cent rock a bat mitzvah.

MAZEL TOV!

50 CENT, AEROSMITH AND KENNY G. ARE PAID UNTOLD AMOUNTS TO PLAY A BAT MITZVAH

ONE WELL-HEELED father raised the bar on bat mitzvah blowouts when he spent \$10 million on a star-studded concert last November.

Embattled defense contractor David H. Brooks, whose Long Island company DHB Industries makes bulletproof vests, some of which were recently deemed defective and unusable by the U.S. Army in Iraq, hired a cavalcade of entertainers to serenade

his 13-year-old daughter Elizabeth. Setting up shop at Manhattan's Rainbow Room were 50 Cent, Aerosmith, Tom Petty, Don Henley, Stevie Nicks, Ciara and Kenny G.

Mr. Brooks changed into a metal-studded, pink leather outfit for the Aerosmith set.

Guests were given \$1,000 gift bags stuffed with digital cameras and video iPods. JOHANNA PIAZZA

BLING REVOLUTION

CAM'RON GOES GLOBAL WITH TECHNOLOGICALLY ADVANCED, DIAMOND-ENCUSTED PENDANT

FORGET DECAY-PROMOTING gold teeth, spinning belt buckles and LED dog tags. Cam'ron's diamond-studded, one-of-a-kind pendant is the latest in bling technology.

The centerpiece of the groundbreaking platinum accessory is the rotating planet Earth, a first in the history of hip-hop bling. "It is the craziest innovation that I've made so far," said New York jewelry designer Avi Aranbayev, who makes extravagant pieces for all the

members of the Diplomats.

"Cam'ron and I came up with the idea of the globe together, and then he was like, 'Can we make it spin?'" explained Aranbayev. "I said, 'Of course,' and it makes sense: The guy rules the world, the world is in his hands."

When asked how much the ornament, which is embellished with 2,000 white, yellow and blue diamonds, is worth, the discreet Aranbayev would say only that Cam'ron paid "a lot." TONY MCNEMAMIN





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ALMOST FAMOUS

ARCTIC MONKEYS

ENGLAND'S WILD-EYED, BABY-FACED ROCK SENSATIONS. CHEEKY!

BY JOSH EELLS
PHOTOGRAPH BY KEVIN TRAGESER

➤ Britain's best new band aren't old enough to legally buy beer in the U.S.—which seems appropriate, since underage drinking is what got the Arctic Monkeys together in the first place.

"We were too young to get into pubs," recalls 20-year-old singer Alex Turner, resting backstage at New York's Bowery Ballroom before his band's second-ever U.S. show. Growing up in Sheffield, a tough, blue-collar steel town, the lads "would just knock about, getting pissed in fields and alleys. One day we were sitting around drinking cider and someone said, 'Should we have a band, then?'"

Arctic Monkeys, left to right:
Andy Nicholson, Matt Helders,
Jamie Cook, Alex Turner.

Never mind that none of the four—Turner, guitarist Jamie Cook, 20, bassist Andy Nicholson, 19, and drummer Matt Helders, 19—had ever played an instrument. Their homemade demos started lighting up the web, and within a year they had thousands of fans shouting along at shows without even having released a song. "There was a patch of gigs we couldn't even finish because people were all over the stage," Cook says. "It was pure chaos."

Last summer they signed to Domino, the indie label that launched Franz Ferdinand. Their first

U.K. single, "I Bet You Look Good on the Dancefloor," was released in October and went straight to No. 1, and one British rock magazine recently named Turner the coolest guy on the planet. "It's all been kind of mad," he says.

But, true to their working-class roots, the Monkeys sing razor-sharp songs about an England full of dead-end jobs and "kids who like to scrap with pool cues in their hands." "We were real trouble-causers in school," Cook says. "But now we're in a fucking band, so it doesn't really matter, does it?"

OUT NOW ➔ **WHATEVER PEOPLE SAY I AM, THAT'S WHAT I'M NOT** DOMINO

**"THERE WERE GIGS WE COULDN'T
FINISH BECAUSE PEOPLE WERE ALL
OVER THE STAGE—PURE CHAOS."**





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Corolla S shown with available equipment. ©2005 Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A., Inc.



WHEN WILL YOUR FAVORITE POP STAR CROAK?

#26 BONO

BIRTH DATE MAY 10, 1960

CURRENT AGE 45

DEATH CALCULATOR STARTS AT AGE 79

CATEGORY YEARS ADDED/SUBTRACTED

Irish ancestry: Life expectancy for males is 74 years. - 5

Stable marriage: Wedded to Ali Hewson for 23 years. + 5

Family: Two daughters and two sons. + 3

Healthy diet: Fresh fruit, low-sodium, carb-free hors-d'oeuvres. + 2

Neurotic: Poetic songwriter, screenwriter, excels at chess. + 4

Accident-prone: Leaps off stage, rooftop dancer, wears dark glasses. - 1

Overcaffeinated: Bandmates say java makes Bono too hyper. - 1

Absentminded: Known for losing things, lost laptop with U2's lyrics. - 2

Optimist: Views the world through rose-colored glasses. + 2

Health risks: Mom died of brain aneurysm (-1), dad died of cancer (-1). - 2

Spiritual: Strong faith since early childhood. + 2

Seriously goal-driven: Career, global activism, "most recognizable advocate." + 3

Loyal friends: Band members are surrogate family and confidantes. + 3

ESTIMATED LIFE EXPECTANCY 92

PROJECTED YEAR OF DEATH **2052**

Dr. Demko, gerontologist: "Bono is beating the odds, but if he wants to keep saving the world, he needs regular physicals to monitor inherited cardio and cancer risks. Mental gymnastics (composing, chess, etc.) will reduce the chance of cognitive disorders."

30. "London after dark/Feel me breathing down your neck/Sending chills down your spine/Hear my microphone check."

NEWS ROUNDUP

Former *American Idol* contestant **JULIA DEMATO** has been arrested and charged with drug possession and drunken driving. Police in Brookfield, Connecticut, searched her SUV and allegedly found two marijuana pipes, marijuana and a small amount of cocaine. "I am not a drug user," she assured her local newspaper.

MARILYN MANSON has married his longtime girlfriend, burlesque dancer Dita Von Teese. The ceremony was held at a friend's Irish castle.

GEORGE MICHAEL and longtime partner Kenny Goss are tying the knot under a new British gay union law. "We won't be doing the whole veil and gown thing," Michael said.

JUSTIN TIMBERLAKE is doing daily vocal exercises to deepen his speaking voice. The pop star was apparently losing potential Hollywood roles because casting directors thought he sounded too much like a little boy.

WORD!



"I DON'T WANT MY BODY TO BE A DISTRACTION FROM MY TALENT OR MY BRAIN."

SHANIA TWAIN



Eminem-obsessed Christopher Duncan bludgeoned Jagdip Najran (below) to death.



MURDER RAP

A FAN OF EMINEM IMITATES "STAN" VIDEO BY MURDERING A GIRL AND STUFFING HER IN A SUITCASE

AN EMINEM SUPERFAN allegedly fashioned his murder of a London law student after a scene in the rapper's video "Stan."

According to prosecutors, Christopher Duncan, 21, met his victim, Jagdip Najran, 26, in 2004 at a London karaoke bar. Before taking her back to his apartment, Duncan impersonated the Detroit MC by singing his songs and wearing look-alike hair and tattoos.

After arriving home, he beat Najran with a metal baseball bat and stuffed her body in a suitcase. Medical experts testified that she was alive for at least an hour after being struck. Duncan was

sentenced to life in prison in December.

Eminem, during an interview with Detroit radio station WKQI-FM, said he failed to see the similarity between the crime and his video.

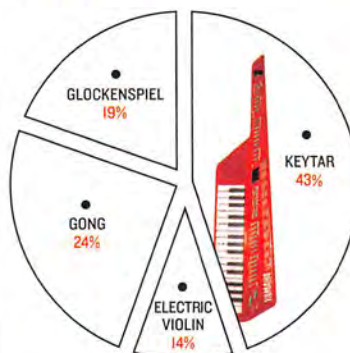
"I try not to let stuff like that bother me," he said a day after Duncan was sentenced. "I hear he stuffed his girlfriend in a suitcase or something. I don't know how they linked that to 'Stan,' because in 'Stan' his girlfriend was in a trunk and he drove over a bridge."

A spokesperson for Eminem, who announced on air that he and former wife Kim Mathers will remarry, had no further comment on the incident. **JOHANNA PIAZZA**

BLENDER'S BURNING QUESTION

WHAT'S THE DORKIEST INSTRUMENT IN ROCK?

SURVEY SAYS



READER WISDOM

"HOW CAN YOU LOOK COOL WITH 66 KEYS ON YOUR HIP?"

T. THOMPSON, SHREVEPORT, LA

Log on to Blender.com for April's "BURNING QUESTION." One deserving reader will have his or her comment published in the next issue and win this **BLACKBERRY 8700c™**.





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Amy Lee's goth it going on!

MY IMMORAL

EVANESCENCE SINGER AMY LEE SAYS FORMER MANAGER SEXUALLY ASSAULTED HER, NEGLECTED HER CAREER, SPENT HER MONEY ON HIS MISTRESS

EVANESCENCE SINGER Amy Lee is countersuing her former manager Dennis Rider for sexual assault, professional negligence and "wrongful, tortuous and unlawful activities."

In the papers she filed in December, Lee claims Rider "neglected [her] career ... and focused his efforts on having extramarital affairs, hiding them from his wife, becoming intoxicated during business meetings, physically abusing women and boasting about it, making repeated unwelcome sexual advances toward Lee, receiving fees in excess of what was provided for in his management agreement and using Lee's corporate credit card to purchase gifts for his mistress," including an \$18,000 car and vacations to New York and Florida.

Lee also claims in the suit, which is her response to a breach-of-contract lawsuit Rider filed against the band a week before, that Rider ran his hand up her leg and told her "he wanted to perform a gynecological examination on her."

Evanscence is currently working on their follow-up to 2003's six-million-selling *Fallen*. NOEL BODDIE

TELL US A JOKE

"YOU KNOW, I WAS LEARNING HOW TO PLAY THE DRUMS RECENTLY, BUT MY DOCTOR ADVISED ME TO GIVE IT UP. HE LIVES IN THE APARTMENT DOWNSTAIRS!"



MURDOC
GORILLAZ BASSIST

32...I'm not happy drunk till I'm drunken/Till you take all of me/I'm not happy waste till I'm wasted."

NEWS ROUNDUP

Kaiser Chiefs frontman **RICKY WILSON** has revealed the post-gig drinking secret of tour pal Dave Grohl: Jägerbombs. "It's a shot of Jägermeister and a shot of Red Bull," he said. "The poor man's speedball, that's what they call it."

IRV GOTTI has been acquitted of the money-laundering charges lodged against him. "I'm never getting into any other trouble—no jaywalking or nothing," the Inc. mogul said.

GWEN STEFANI has decided to halt work halfway through the recording of her second solo album. "It's more important that I take a nap," she said.

Poison singer **BRET MICHAELS** is refusing to halt his tour following an incident in which someone shot at his tour bus. The singer, who got broken glass in his face, issued a statement saying, "It is going to take more than a cowardice act like this to make me stop performing."

WORD!



"I WANT TO BE PRESERVED IN AMBER RIDING A WHITE TIGER, IN A LOINCLOTH, WAVING."

JUSTIN HAWKINS ON HOW HE'D LIKE TO BE BURIED



Stapp to Schirripa: "Look! I'm pointing!"

PUNCH DRUNK

A SOUSED **SCOTT STAPP** SCRAPS WITH 311, HOWARD STERN'S GIRLFRIEND

WITH HIS FIRST solo album, *The Great Divide*, now in stores, former Creed lead singer Scott Stapp is celebrating ... by getting drunk and picking fights in public.

Stapp incurred the wrath of Howard Stern after calling Stern's girlfriend Beth Ostrosky a "bimbo" last December while a guest on her Spike TV show *Casino Cinema* alongside co-host Steve Schirripa of *The Sopranos*. "He was belligerent, every other word a curse, flashing the finger, knocking over chairs," said Debra Fazio of Spike TV. During the taping, Stapp called Bono "an asshole," referred to Dave Grohl's genitalia as "freaking

little" and revealed that his 7-year-old son thinks babies come from "my sack."

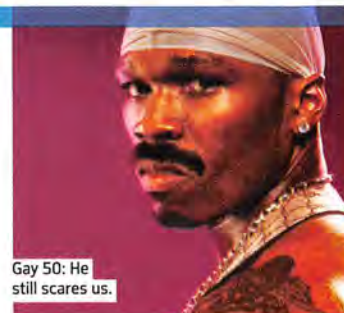
Members of rock band 311, in a post on their website, also described Stapp's behavior as "belligerent." Recounting their experience at a Baltimore hotel bar on Thanksgiving Day, they said Stapp smashed a shot glass, made a "disrespectful and crude remark" to the wife of 311 singer S.A. Martinez and sucker-punched drummer Chad Sexton, inciting a brawl that resulted in a fractured knuckle for Martinez. Both Stapp and the director of hotel security have since said that 311 started the fight. STEVE KANDELL

G-G-G-G GAY UNIT!

50 CENT CAN ADD FREDDIE MERCURY AND **QUEEN** TO HIS LONG LIST OF COLLABORATORS—SORT OF

The songs of 50 Cent and his G-Unit posse and those of flamboyant British rockers Queen are paired up on *Q-Unit*, a new mashup disc in the tradition of Dangermouse's *Grey Album*, which combined the Beatles' "White Album" with Jay-Z's *The Black Album*.

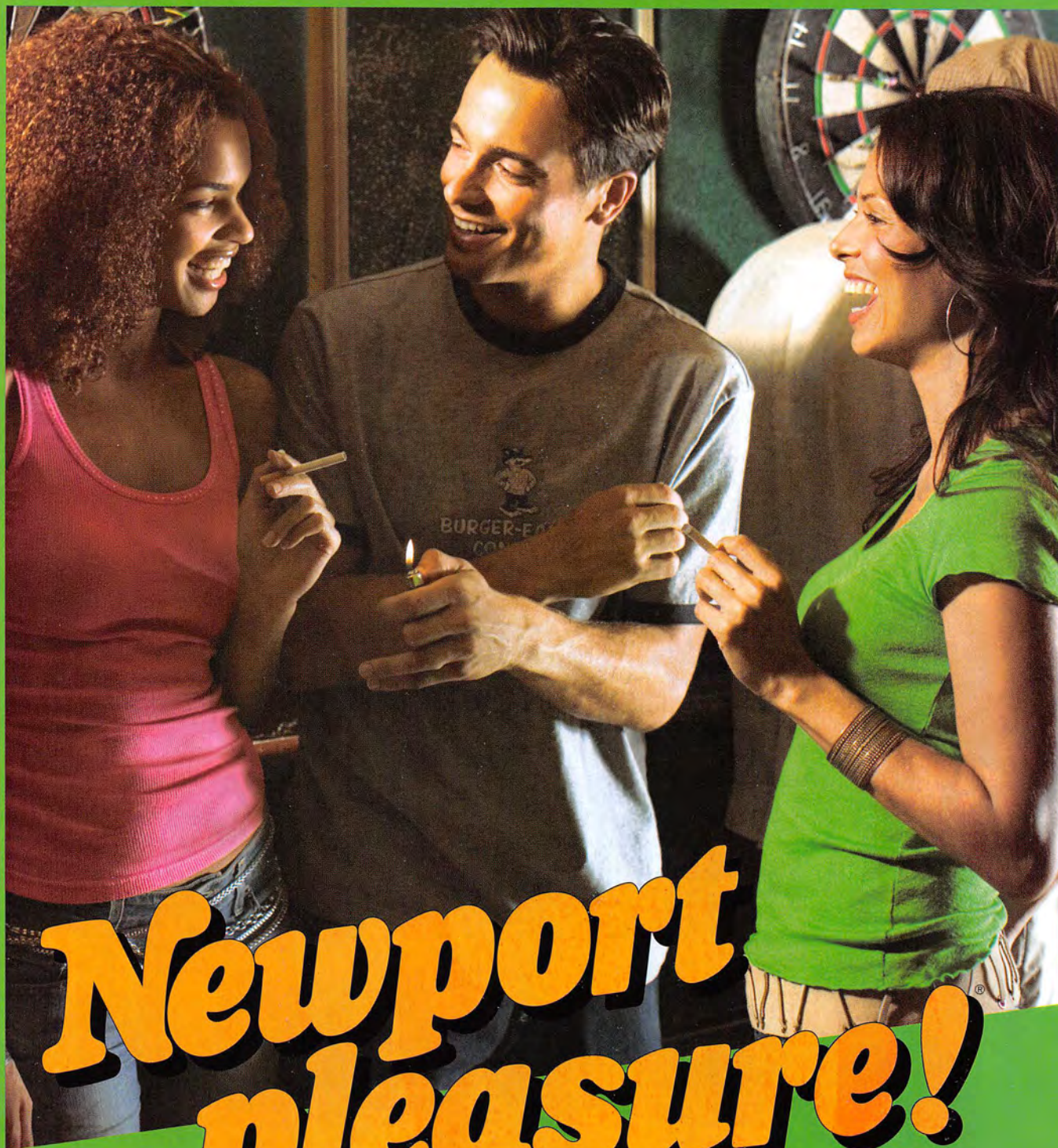
Created by Jimmy Lesondak, a 25-year-old music major from California, the surprisingly catchy album is available on www.q-unit.net, where it has so far been downloaded more than 100,000 times—solely on



Gay 50: He still scares us.

the strength of word of mouth. "We Will Rock You in da Club" is an album highlight.

"I hope it's opened people up to listening to a band they wouldn't otherwise," says Lesondak, who recorded the album under the name the Silence Xperiment. "Queen are more gangsta than you'd think!" NOEL BODDIE



Newport pleasure!

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Menthol Box (package design), Newport Pleasure and Newport Spinnaker
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Injury, Premature Birth, And Low Birth Weight.



Lights Box: 10 mg. "tar," 0.8 mg. nicotine; Medium Box: 13 mg. "tar," 1.1 mg.
nicotine; Box: 18 mg. "tar," 1.4 mg. nicotine av. per cigarette by FTC method.

HOW TO...

BUY LINGERIE FOR YOUR LADY

Sure. It's a "Valentine's Day present." For your "girlfriend." Chantal Claret, lead singer of the New York garage-rock band **MORNINGWOOD**, kindly spares you humiliation at the hands of snickering Victoria's Secret salesmodels

BY CHANTAL CLARET
PHOTOGRAPH BY F. SCOTT SCHAFER

1

DO HOMEWORK

"Go to the store prepared with her measurements. You'll only get one chance to make the right impression. If you buy too big, your lady will think you're saying she's fat. And if you buy too small, she'll think you're saying she's fat. Either way, you're screwed."

2

GET HELP

"Don't be afraid to ask the salespeople for help. They are there to guide you through this embarrassing time. For bras, the classic 'I think she's about your size, lemme see ...' always seems to work. I still fall for it, and I don't even sell bras! Just visualize your kitty all dressed up, and be brave!"

3

TEST DRIVE

"Gotta try out the merchandise. But not on yourself, silly! Ask the closest woman to try on those crotchless panties and see if you like what you're buying. Remember, stores often have a no-return policy on underwear, so you need to play it safe. You wouldn't buy a car without test-driving it, would you?"

4

BE SELFISH

"Think about what you want and stop pretending this is a present for her. It's like when Homer bought Marge a bowling ball for her birthday and it was inscribed 'Homer.' Even if you think something is too risqué for her, buy it anyway. She can wear it on Halloween, the day most women dress like the sluts they are."

MORNINGWOOD'S SELF-TITLED
DEBUT (CAPITOL) IS OUT NOW

CHANTAL: CORSET BY VICTORIA'S
SECRET STOCKINGS BY WOLFORD
THIGH-HIGHS BY PLAYBOY SHOES
BY ZIGGY JEWELRY BY NOIR
ROB: SWEATER BY AL FRENZI SHIRT
BY PENGUIN PANTS BY EDDIE
BAUER GLASSES BY RICKY'S NYC



Dear Ketel One Drinker
Can you find the subliminal
message in this advertisement?

NEWS
ROUNDUP

Troubled rapper **FOXY BROWN** reportedly made a scene in the Signature Bank on Park Avenue in New York while attempting to withdraw \$2,000 in cash. According to an eyewitness, she "cursed out a bank manager" and "started screaming."

Legendary New York punk club **CBGB** is being forced to leave its premises on the Lower East Side by the property's landlords, but not until October 31, 2006. Owner Hilly Kristal is currently looking at other spaces in Manhattan.

The family of Damageplan/Pantera guitarist **"DIMEBAG" DARRELL ABBOTT** has filed a lawsuit against the Alrosa Villa nightclub in Columbus, Ohio, where he was killed, citing inadequate security arrangements.

MARY J. BLIGE is slated to star in a biopic on legendary jazz singer Nina Simone.

WORD!



"GUY THOUGHT IT WAS SHIT."

MADONNA ON HER HUSBAND'S THOUGHTS ABOUT HER NEW ALBUM

GOOD
VIBRATIONS

A NEW DATING WEBSITE—AND A NEW "MUSICAL ORGASM" ADAPTOR—HELP THE IPOD GET ITS FREAK ON

THE IPOD IS becoming a tool for love—and lust. A new matchmaking website, *poddater.com*, allows date-seeking singles to download video profiles of men and women on to a video-enabled iPod and upload their own.

And in a raunchier twist on Apple's portable technology, a British company has created a gadget that turns the iPod into a little white pleasure box.

The iBuzz is a vibrator that, when connected to an MP3 player, emits stimulating pulses in time with music. The pill-shaped sex toy, which retails for \$50 in the U.K., comes with two his-and-hers attachments with multifaceted rubber nodes. Turning up the volume increases the vibrations.

Ali Carnegie, a spokeswoman for *Lovehoney.co.uk*, the adult online store where the iBuzz was a top holiday seller, suggests that part of its appeal is discreetness. Women, she says, can use it "on their way to work." Apple has no plans to sell the device in their stores. NOEL BODDIE



iBuzz vibrator: We recommend the 12" remix.



IN THE STUDIO

T.I., pictured seconds before the the sprinkler system kicked in.

"WE GOT IT ALL!"

SELF-STYLED "KING OF THE SOUTH" T.I. DIALS UP A STAR-STUDDED THIRD ALBUM

"I WANT TO work with the elite of the game," says T.I. "Because that's what I am."

The 25-year-old MC is in his native Atlanta, hard at work on the follow-up to 2004's platinum-selling *Urban Legend*. For the new album—titled *King*—he plans to work with a host of A-list collaborators, including Timbaland, Rick Rubin, Outkast, Bun B and his current tourmate and fellow ATL-er, Young Jeezy. "Me and Jeezy are working on a lot of things right now," T.I. says. "It's not often you've got two guys from the same city who are on top at the same time and cool with one another."

The rapper, born Clifford Harris Jr., has recorded more than 30 songs, and wants to do several more before narrowing it down to the final 14. The tentative first single, "Stand Up Guy," is "just me talking to females," he says, "telling them they're listening to the hottest cat they can possibly leave with tonight, and anything else is a plan B."

Other songs include "The King Back," produced by Just Blaze, and

"The Good Life," a Neptunes-produced track featuring Pharrell and Jay-Z. "The whole album is an explanation of why I call myself the King of the South," he says. "Whether it's because I'm flyer than you, I got more money than you, the ladies like me more than you or I keep it realer in the 'hood than you."

He's certainly been living like a king, recording his rhymes in a posh new personal studio. "We got it all, man. Pool tables, PlayStations, flat-screen TVs, Heineken and Grey Goose, good company. And a private area, of course—to tuck away and ... you know. Inspire yourself." JOSH EELLS

ALL ABOUT MY RECORD

ARTIST T.I.
PRODUCER Just Blaze, the Neptunes, et al.
STUDIO Executive Recordings, Atlanta
LAST ALBUM *Urban Legend*, 2004
NEW ALBUM *King*, due Spring 2006

ALSO IN THE STUDIO

Dancehall stunner and Jay-Z protégé **RIHANNA** is recording her sophomore album at studios in Las Vegas and her native Barbados with producers Sturken & Rogers (Christina Aguilera, Kelly Clarkson).

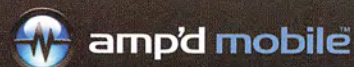
Gender-bending rapper **PEACHES** has been recording and producing her third album at Seedy Underbelly in Los Angeles. Guests appearing on the album include Joan Jett, Josh Homme and Feist.

Southern-fried rock outfit **DRIVE-BY TRUCKERS** are working on their seventh record, *A Blessing and a Curse*, at producer David Barbe's studio, Chase Park Transduction, in Athens, Georgia.

Aussie retro-rock quartet **JET** are working on their follow-up to 2003's 1.6-million-selling album *Get Born* in a Los Angeles studio with producer Dave Sardi, due later this spring.



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ALMOST FAMOUS

MATISYAHU

HOLLA 'SHALOM!' FOR THE WORLD'S FIRST HASIDIC REGGAE STAR

BY CLARK COLLIS

➤ ASKING MOST REGGAE singers about smoking ganja is a fairly redundant exercise. But then, most reggae singers are not, like Matisyahu, orthodox Jews, which means he prays three times a day, declines to perform on the Sabbath and is unlikely to be found bogarting anyone's "jay."

"Marijuana is not mentioned in the Torah," says the New York-based singer, eating Kosher lasagna at a Manhattan pizza parlor. "But there is a law that you're not supposed to do anything that can damage yourself. So I abstain."

That abstinence has not stopped the man born Matthew Miller from selling more than 100,000 copies of his 2005 debut, *Live at Stubb's*, which fuses '70s-era reggae with hip-hop raps, lyrics about Judaism and the occasional guitar solo. As a teenager he was a fan of both Bob Marley and Phish, even following the jam band around the country—when he wasn't accidentally "setting his dreads on fire in chemistry class."

After traveling to Israel and dropping out of high school, Matisyahu was drawn to religious study. He put all musical ambitions on hold and, in his early 20s, entered a Brooklyn yeshiva, an all-male institution for Torah study. But, after nine months of schooling, Matisyahu began performing live shows. In a move unlikely to be copied by Mötley Crüe, he played many of those concerts without his eyeglasses, so as not to be distracted by immodestly dressed females. Ultimately though, the 26-year-old says, "It was important for me to be able to see my audience."

As he releases his new CD, *Youth*, it seems his fan base is growing and that his days of playing weddings and bar mitzvahs are permanently in the past.

"We made a pretty strong rule about not doing that anymore," he chuckles. "No one really likes playing in front of 20 screaming 13-year-olds, asking you to play Bruce Springsteen. I mean, I like Bruce Springsteen. I just don't know any of his songs."

OUT NOW *YOUTH* JGUB/OR/EPIC

ALL ABOUT ME!

WON'T TOUR WITHOUT:
Prayer books, kosher food

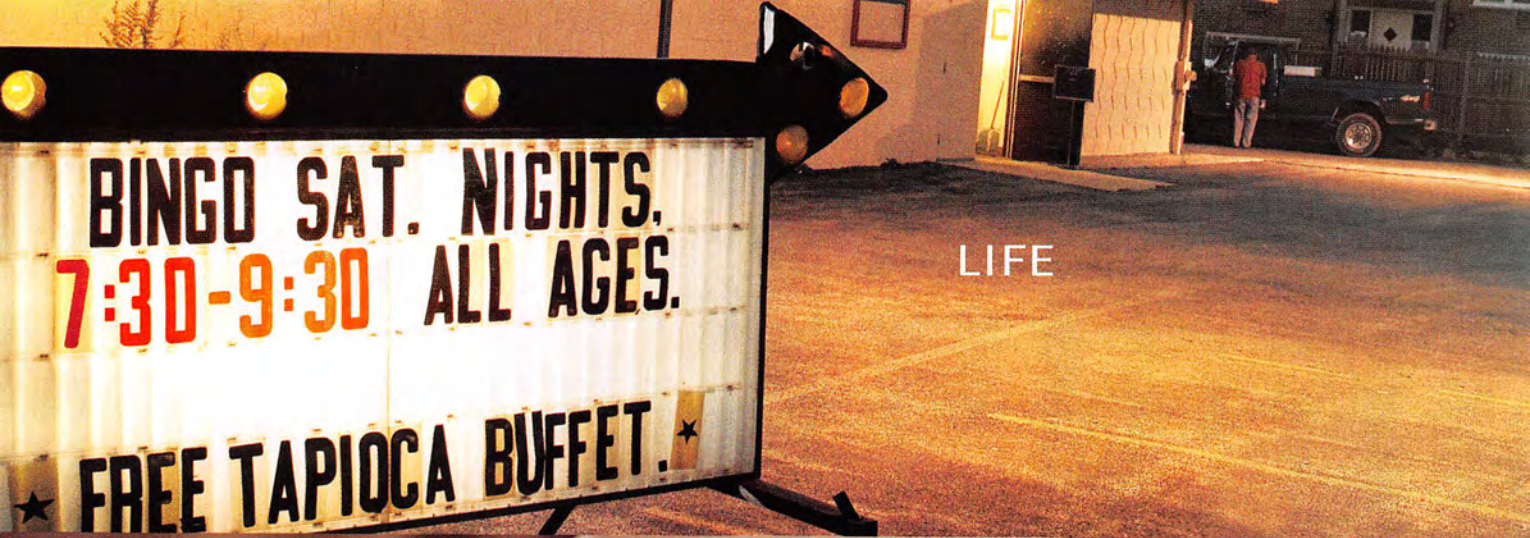
FAVORITE SONG RIGHT NOW:
"Welcome to Jamrock" by Damian Marley

HIDDEN TALENT:
Rollerblading

TYPICAL NIGHT OF DEBAUCHERY INCLUDES:
I'm married. To a certain degree I get the unwanted attentions of female fans. But nothing too bad.

38 "Look at you now, holdin' on by yourself/Baby, don't doubt, you're walkin' on water."

"THE TORAH SAYS NOT TO
DAMAGE YOURSELF, SO I ABSTAIN
FROM MARIJUANA."



LIFE

LIFE IN 



221-hp V6* • Up to 32 hwy mpg** • Class-exclusive 6-speed automatic transmission† • More innovation from Ford

*Optional on SE and SEL. **EPA estimated 24 city/32 hwy mpg (I4/automatic transmission). †Class is midsize sedan.



THE ALL-NEW
FUSION
fordvehicles.com

J.D. Fortune wins \$20 in hat-related wager.



DO YOU ROCK?

J.D. FORTUNE

DOES THE NEW **INXS** FRONTMAN AND VEGETARIAN (AND REAL LIVE CANADIAN) INDEED ... ROCK?

Best rumor about yourself?

That I was faking being Canadian.

Biggest celebrity's home you've ever gotten drunk in?

Mark Burnett, producer of *Survivor* and *Rock Star*: **INXS**.

Brush with the law?

In Ontario, I got pulled over for speeding outside a club, an hour after I finished a gig. There were two cops and one of them was at the show. He said, "You were great! Can I get a picture?" He took my picture, then gave me a speeding ticket.

Biggest celeb in your cellphone?

Mark Burnett.

Ever wreck a car?

When I was 15, in Nova Scotia, we had an old Honda Civic, and we would drive it into abandoned cars.

Ever get lucky on an airplane?

Yes.

Worst place you've been sick?

I puked on a stairwell while walking out of a club in L.A. recently.

Stupidest thing you've ever eaten?

Toy gun caps, when I was 10. There's not a lot to do when you live on a farm.

Most expensive item of clothing?

A shirt that **INXS** autographed before I was in the band. To me, it's priceless.

Craziest rider clause?

Raspberry yogurt. **DAVE HILL**

VERDICT

BETWEEN EATING GUN CAPS AND HAVING SEEMINGLY UNLIMITED MARK BURNETT ACCESS, IT CANNOT BE DISPUTED: J.D. IS WELL ON HIS WAY TO ROCKING!



INXS'S SWITCH IS OUT NOW.

OBITS

CHRIS WHITLEY 45, November 20, in Houston, Texas, of lung cancer. Bluesy singer-songwriter whose 1991 Columbia debut, *Living With the Law*, put him on a career path of critical acclaim. Released *Rocket House* a decade later on ATO Records, operated by one of Whitley's biggest fans, Dave Matthews.

MANA "CHINA" NISHIURA 34, November 4, near Pennsville, New Jersey, in a car accident. Former drummer for the Japanese alt-rock band Shonen Knife. Nishiura was touring with the group **DMBQ** when their van was clipped on the interstate by another car, causing it to roll down an embankment. Nishiura was pronounced dead at the scene.

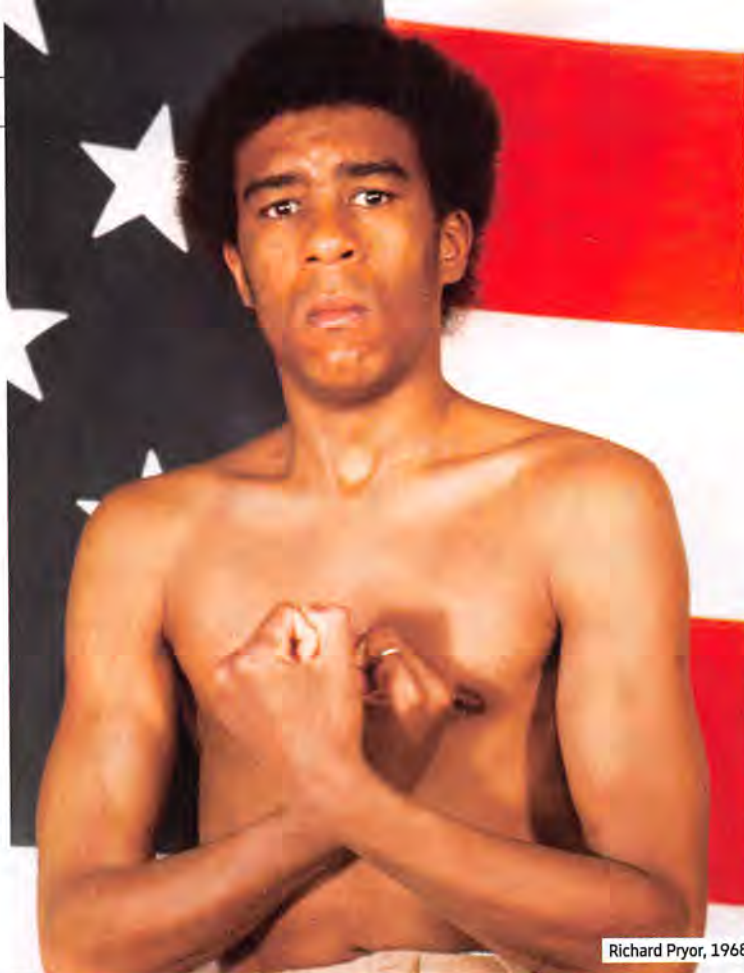
JOHN HOLOHAN 31, October 31, near Cheyenne, Wyoming, in a car accident. Drummer for the rock band **Bayside**. The band was en route to a concert in Utah when their van hit a patch of ice on the interstate and flipped over.

WORD!



"I THINK KELLY'S STRAIGHT, BUT I COULD EAT HER UP."

PINK ON KELLY OSBOURNE



Richard Pryor, 1968.

RICHARD PRYOR

PIONEERING COMEDIAN DIED OF A HEART ATTACK IN CALIFORNIA AT THE AGE OF 65

"THE TRUTH IS GONNA be funny," Richard Pryor observed, "but it's gonna scare the shit out of folks."

Throughout his 40-year career as a Grammy-winning comic, actor and television writer, Pryor's murderous wit made him a celebrity. But it was the laundry-airing conscience that made him a legend.

When the 65-year-old Pryor died of a heart attack last December in Encino, California, the world lost more than a comedian; it lost a fearless social critic. Before the hip-hop generation started obliterating taboos, Pryor was already there, cracking profane, profound jokes about his own vice-filled life alongside the "junkies and winos, pool hustlers and prostitutes."

When Pryor began his standup career in the early 1960s, he was just another Bill Cosby clone, spouting polite, harmless jokes. But in 1970 he introduced edgier material that challenged the conventions of African-American society, poked fun at white folks and reminisced on the rough, long-suppressed imagery of his Peoria, Illinois, upbringing.

Over the next decade, routines like "Super Nigger," albums like 1974's *That Nigger's Crazy* and '75's ... *Is*

It Something I Said?, along with his incendiary television appearances, would push the boundaries of the socially acceptable and capture the imaginations of hip-hop's young heroes-in-waiting. Cocky, brash and unnervingly honest, he inspired artists like Tupac, N.W.A and DJ Quik, all of whom sampled his records as well as his exaggerated attitude.

Perhaps Pryor's boldest move as a proto-MC was his constant use of the dreaded N-word, an act of subversive, chest-thumping pride. "I decided to take the sting out of it," he said. "As if saying it over and over again would numb me and everybody else to its wretchedness." (In fact, many obituaries have blamed him for the word's proliferation, even though he stopped using it after a life-changing trip to Kenya in 1979.)

Though multiple sclerosis restricted Pryor's movement over the past few years, he recognized traces of his act in outspoken urban artists like Dave Chappelle, Kanye West and Nas. Self-effacing but hopeful to the very end, Pryor reminded audiences that a better world is still possible, even if you have to laugh to keep from crying on the way there. **HUA HSU**



GET FRESH BREATH. GET BIG RED.



20 SONGS YOU SHOULD DOWNLOAD THIS MONTH

1 DADDY YANKEE

"ROMPE" EL CARTE/INTERSCOPE

Reggaeton's biggest star hollers his way through a booty-throbbing party.

2 FRANZ FERDINAND

"WHAT YOU WAITING FOR?" [ONLINE]

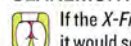
From a live BBC session, a Gwen Stefani cover that rocks 1,000% harder than it has any right to.

3 THE DARKNESS

"KNOCKERS" ATLANTIC

A lustful, rocking fantasy about caressing a foxy mama's pert, beautiful ... hair?

4 BUBBA SPARXXX FEAT. KILLER MIKE AND COOL BREEZE

"CLAREMONT LOUNGE" PURPLE RIBBON/VIRGINIf the *X-Files* set an episode in a strip club, it would sound something like this.

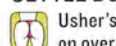
5 THE BLACK EYED PEAS

"MY HUMPS (LIL JON REMIX)" ABMThe least erotic celebration of boobies since *Jiggs* gets a flycrunk makeover.

7 SHAKIRA

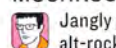
"ANIMAL CITY" EPICSpy-movie guitars? Steamy electro? Yodeling? Only *Blender*'s favorite Colombian bombshell could pull it off, all at once.

8 RICO LOVE

"SETTLE DOWN" J RECORDS

Usher's rapping protégé gets his smooove on over a stripped-down kick-drum pulse.

9 SUPERCREEP

"MUSHROOM CLOUD" PAT'S

Jangly garage rock from a New Jersey alt-rock weirdo, to get you humming about the imminent nuclear apocalypse.

10 WOLFMOTHER

"DIMENSION" MODULAR/INTERSCOPE

Aussie blues-metal squad goes on an acid-trip in the desert, discovers Ozzy is God.

11 FALL OUT BOY

"DANCE, DANCE" ISLAND

Emo-punk punsters bid adieu to an unfaithful ex with this thrashing rump-shaker.

12 JAPANTHER

"WOLFENSWAN" PLAN-IT-X

A fleet, no-wave noise groove, ostensibly about some way-fucked-up genetic experiments.

13 LOW DEEP

"GET SET" VICE

Some of the toughest British people on earth lace a raucous, rocking grime anthem.

14 HOMEBWOI

"FLATLINE" COLLAPARK/ASYLUM

From the producer of the Ying Yang Twins' "Wait (The Whisper Song)," comes a new Georgia protégé and a new horny, horny rant.

15 CHRIS BROWN

"YO (EXCUSE ME, MISS)" JIVE

From the candy-voiced R&B newbie, a slow-stirred pickup jam.

16 MATCHBOOK ROMANCE

"MONSTERS" EPITAPH

Not to be confused with My Chemical 20, this New York State punk four-some get their high-decibel emo on.

17 MARY J. BLIGE FEAT. U2

"ONE" GEFFEN

Blige and Bono crank out a bizarre but anthemic cover of the classic U2 breakup lament.

18 SHE WANTS REVENGE

"THESE THINGS" FLAWLESS/GEFFEN

Broody new wavers moan and rock out on the subject of hot Goth girls.

19 CAM'RON

"GET EM DADDY REMIX" DIPLOMAT/ASYLUM

Mr. Giles taunts carjackers, raps the entire alphabet out of order and performs other acts of insane brilliance.

20 VOXTROT

"MISSING PIECES" CULT HERO

Heavily hyped Austin, Texas, indie-rock boys whip up this pretty barnstormer about love lost.

6

SONG OF THE MONTH

RHYMEFEST

"BRAND NEW" ALLIJO/J RECORDS

Kanye West's Chi-town homey makes like a 2006 Biz Markie on this gleefully dorky, 'Ye-produced brag-a-thon.



Rhymefest: the illest safety inspector in Quadrant C.

ICON KEY



SADOES



HIPSTERS



RAWK



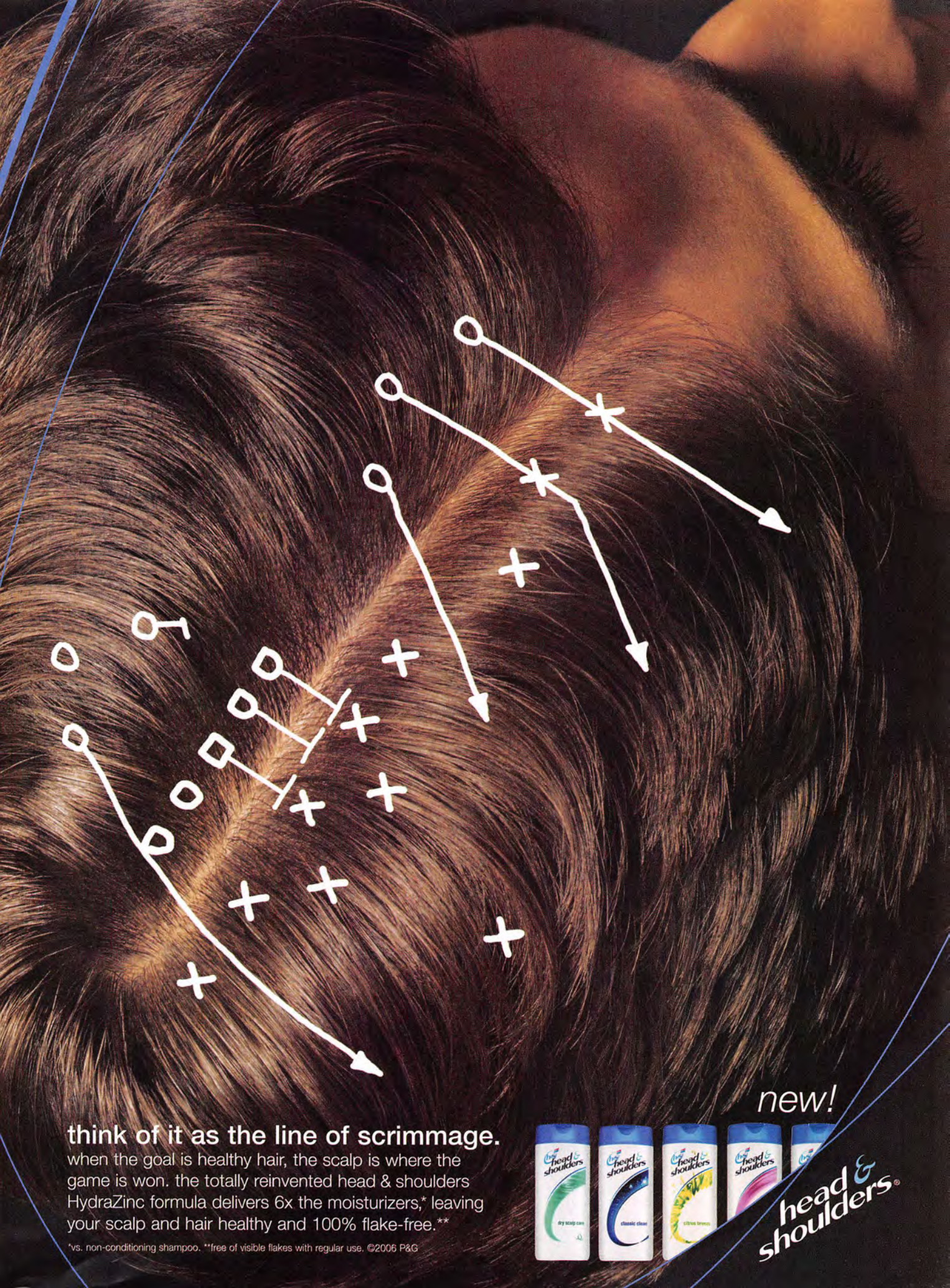
AGING HIPSTERS



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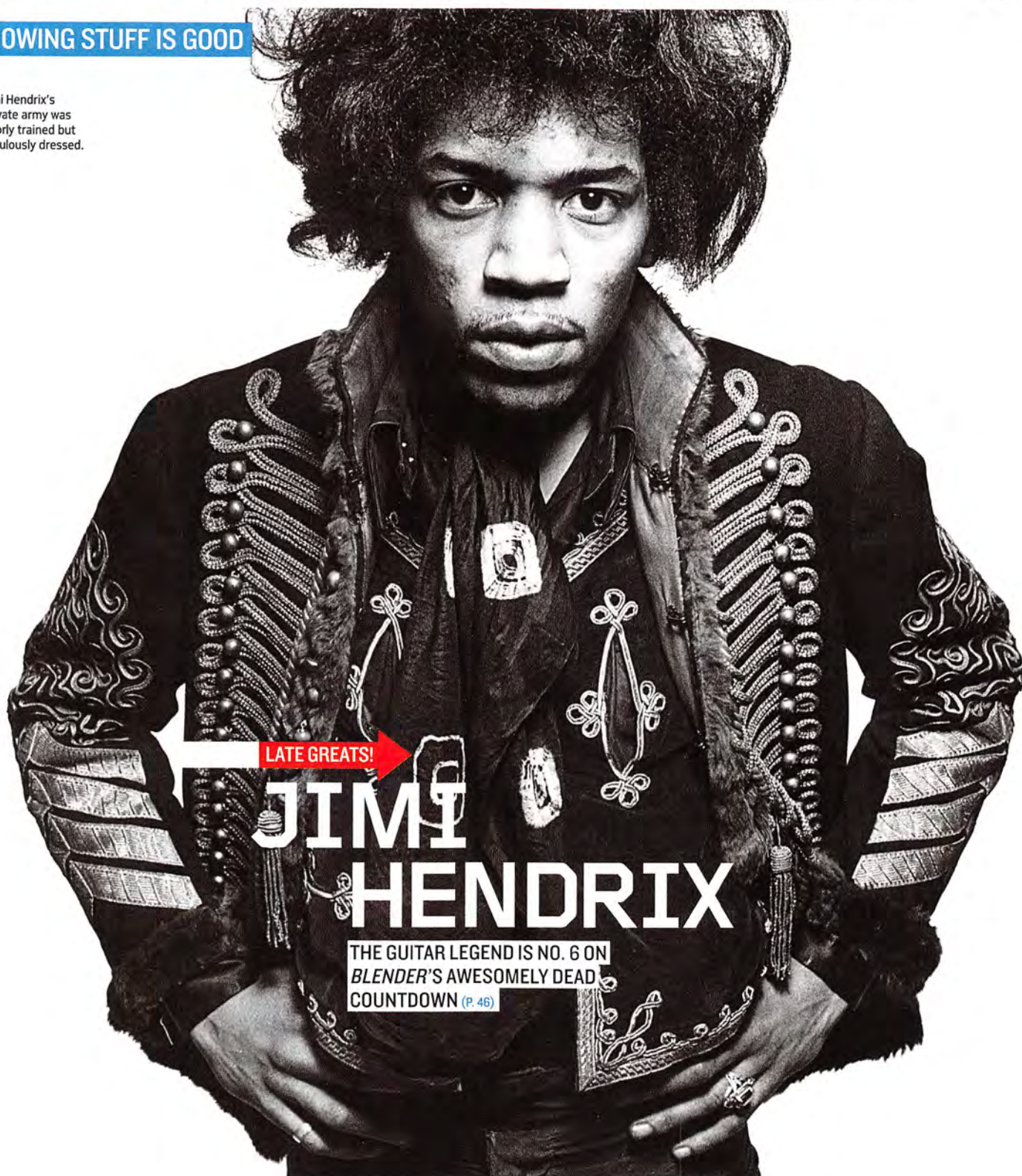
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INSIDER

KNOWING STUFF IS GOOD

Jimi Hendrix's private army was poorly trained but fabulously dressed.



LATE GREATS!

JIMI HENDRIX

THE GUITAR LEGEND IS NO. 6 ON
BLENDER'S AWESOMELY DEAD
COUNTDOWN (P. 46)



\$0 THE MOST AWESOMELY DEAD ROCK STARS

FOR MANY MUSICIANS, DEATH IS NOT A FINAL RECKONING—IT'S THE BEST CAREER MOVE THEY EVER MADE. SO WHICH IMMORTAL SOULS ARE RAISING THE MOST HELL IN 2006? FROM JOEY RAMONE TO THE NOTORIOUS B.I.G. TO JOHNNY CASH, THE DEARLY DEPARTED ARE JUST *DYING* TO GET ON *BLENDER'S* FIRST ANNUAL CORPSETASTIC POWER LIST!



→ BY CLARK COLLIS, DANNY ECCLESTON, FRED GOODMAN, WILL HERMES, RUPERT HOWE, BEN MITCHELL, CHRIS NORRIS, ANN POWERS, PETER RUBIN, JAMES SLAUGHTER AND DOUGLAS WOLK



Nirvana: The ol' banana-peel-onstage gag—a classic.

50

APPETITE FOR SELF-DESTRUCTION

Layne Staley 1967–2002

Alice in Chains frontman

Cause of Death: Overdose

Inelegantly Wasted: Locking himself away in his apartment and doing drugs for five years until he died, only to be found two weeks later after his accountant noticed he hadn't spent any money for a while, Staley's was one of the grimmest rock deaths ever. Despite selling 11 million albums, Alice in Chains were always in the shadow of the twin peaks of Seattle rock, Nirvana and Pearl Jam. Similarly, after Kurt Cobain sensationally took his own life, Staley's death—long after grunge's own—caused little stir. A local vigil held the day after his body was discovered drew only 200 mourners.

Breaking the Chain? No new material has been posthumously released. In 2005, Alice in Chains performed a Tsunami benefit show with guest singers including Maynard James Keenan of Tool, but there are no permanent reunion plans.

Memory Layne: Pearl Jam's Eddie Vedder recorded the tribute "4/20/02," a reference to the date he heard of Staley's death. Staind also marked the singer's passing with the song "Layne." Staley's mother, Nancy McCallum, established the Layne Staley Fund, a drug-treatment charity for heroin-addicted musicians that hosts an annual benefit.

Forecast for 2006: ⬇️

Aaliyah: "Damn, my thumbs are cold!"

49

SONGS OF THE SOUTH

Stephen Foster

1826–1864

America's first professional songwriter

Cause of Death: Impoverishment

Tarnished Star: The 19th century's most famous tunesmith had no copyright protection, and so made no bank. The composer of "Camptown Races" and "Oh! Susanna" died after a feverish collapse in a cheap New York hotel. His fortune was the 38 cents in his pocket.

Two-faced: Pennsylvania native Foster wrote about the South but rarely left the North. He was white, but used the now-horrifying slang of blackface minstrelsy. None of this helped his post-civil-rights era rep. In 1996 the only two African-American members of the Yale Glee Club protested three Foster songs slated for a public performance; two were cut and the Glee Club president publicly burned a copy of the music.

Salvage Job: Foster's status began changing around the time documentarian Ken Burns made the Civil War hip again. Ken Emerson's 1997 biography, the first in 60 years, contextualized Foster's functional racism; a PBS doc and a tribute album followed. Americana lovers from Dylan on down revived Foster's songs; twinkle-toed choreographer Mark Morris wrote a dance using them. Foster's still not quite the bomb, but his phantom's on the mend.

Forecast for 2006: ⬆️

48

MORE THAN A WOMAN

Aaliyah 1979–2001

R&B princess

Cause of Death: Plane crash

One in a Million: Talked-up as her generation's answer to Diana Ross before her death, Aaliyah has since achieved a kind of sainthood, destined to be remembered for her "Beautiful smile, long hair and the voice of a hummingbird," as Missy Elliott put it on her 2002 tribute, "Can You Hear Me."

The Final Cut: Unlike those made legends by their demise, Aaliyah remains a superstar-in-waiting. Despite her string of Timbaland-produced hits, only her final album, *Aaliyah*, topped the charts, and there was always a feeling she was about to step up another level. Hollywood, for one, was calling—she was the best thing in *Queen of the Damned* and had three movies in production when the plane she was traveling in crashed just after takeoff.

Peer Plaudits: Her family, who settled a negligence suit with the aircraft's operators out of court, established the Aaliyah Memorial Fund and announced that a portion of the profits from her music would be donated to charities. Posthumous compilation *I Care 4 U* went platinum, but there's little unreleased material left for future releases—and her planned collaboration with Nine Inch Nails' Trent Reznor will sadly remain forever unrealized.

Forecast for 2006: ⬇️

47

"MACK" IN BLACK

Bobby Darin 1936–1973

Finger-popping vocalist

Cause of Death: Complications from open-heart surgery

Swinging Into Oblivion: A showbiz trooper, Darin literally worked himself to death. In 1973 he was making \$75,000 a week in Vegas, but he pushed his chronically weak ticker until an infection felled him. His son Dodd now maintains his dad's estate with the help of Darin's longtime manager, Steve Blauner.

Unhip Years: A catalogue wavering between the Rat Pack and the counterculture hurt Darin's reputation. Hits like his finger-snappin' "Mack the Knife" killed on oldies radio, but his folk-rock efforts weren't freaky enough for Gen X. A classy 1995 box set showed range, but failed to focus interest.

Big Mack With Cheese: Advertisers love Darin—Kodak, Oral B and Carnival Cruise Lines have hawked products using his plastic croon. But there's a fine line between love and exploitation: The estate sued McDonald's in 1989 over a campaign imitating "Mack the Knife." The case could have set an intellectual-property precedent, but was settled.

Lost at Sea: Just when baby Darin imitators Michael Bublé and Jamie Cullum surfaced, superfan Kevin Spacey released the disastrous biopic *Beyond the Sea*, sinking all hope for a revival.

Forecast for 2006: ⬇️

DEAD OR NOT? TEST YOUR NECROLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE



JOHN STEVENS

CARROTTOP AMERICAN IDOL CROONER

(SEE P. 70 FOR ANSWER)

SURGEON GENERAL'S WARNING: Quitting Smoking
Now Greatly Reduces Serious Risks to Your Health.

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MILDS BOX: 10 mg. "tar", 0.9 mg. nicotine, FILTER KINGS
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KOOL
BE TRUE.

46

THE METAL LENNON

"Dimebag" Darrell Abbott 1966–2004

Pantera guitarist

Cause of Death: Shot dead by fan

Dropping the Dime: Largely unknown in the mainstream during his lifetime, death made Abbott suddenly world famous—when he became the first musician ever murdered onstage, shot repeatedly by deranged gunman Nathan Gale in Columbus, Ohio.

Live and Dangerous: As guitarist in Pantera, Abbott was part of one of the most successful hard-rock bands of the '90s: The band's 1994 release, *Far Beyond Driven*, debuted at No. 1 on the *Billboard* charts and was nearly as instrumental in the demise of hair metal as the advent of grunge.

The Memory Remains: Pantera split in 2001, and Abbott's next band, the somewhat less influential Damageplan, released just one album and dissolved the instant he died. Those wishing to remember Abbott in model form can purchase a commemorative action figure—only 3,333 made at \$99 apiece.

My Best Friend's Shredding: David Draiman of Disturbed described the day Abbott was killed as "the 9/11 of rock."

Forecast for 2006: ➔

45

BEFORE HE GOT OLD

Keith Moon 1946–1978

Hyperactive Who drummer

Cause of Death: Choked on vomit after OD on pills

Who Went First: Neither Moon's early death nor the fact that he left an estate valued at just \$750,000 was surprising for a rock superstar who spent his extensive off-time between Who tours and albums partying and spending hard. He died intestate, making it difficult for his daughter, Amanda, to collect what she could have. But even though Pete Townshend wrote almost all the Who's songs, today they're licensed so widely and lucratively—in commercials for cars, computers and allergy medicine as well as the title music for all three *CSI* TV shows—that Moon's share likely exceeds seven figures.

Peer Plaudits: Though widely recognized by other drummers as a unique stylist and breathtaking performer, Moon remains best-known as the godfather of nihilistic rock-star excess—and for a career of stripping naked in airports, destroying hotel rooms and drum kits and consuming record quantities of alcohol and pharmaceuticals.

Give the Drummer Some: Bandmate Roger Daltrey's 10-year quest to produce a biopic of Moon finally bore fruit last October when Mike Myers agreed to handle the role.

Forecast for 2006: ➔

44

DANCES WITH WEREWOLVES

Warren Zevon 1947–2003

Mordant singer-songwriter

Cause of Death: Lung cancer

Life After Death: In 2002 the heavy-smoking Zevon was diagnosed with cancer and given three months to live. In fact, he survived for over a year—in which time he was the subject of a VH1 documentary, appeared as the sole guest on an episode of *The Late Show With David Letterman* and recorded a CD, *The Wind*. Released two weeks before his death, the album debuted at No. 16 on the *Billboard* charts (its predecessor had failed to crack the top 200).

Mr. Bad Example: Both a one-hit wonder and a much-covered songwriter whose titles have so far inspired two movies (*Things to Do in Denver When You're Dead* and *I'll Sleep When I'm Dead*), Zevon's legacy is peculiarly diverse. But it's safe to say that "Werewolves of London" will feature on radio stations' Halloween playlists until the universe implodes.

Peer Plaudits: As soon as Zevon's condition was made public, Bob Dylan began including a range of his songs in his live shows, while a 2004 tribute album featured Dylan, Springsteen and the Pixies. Last year another covers CD, *Hurry Home Early*, was recorded by up-and-coming artists.

Forecast for 2006: ➔



Sid Vicious: "Bring me something without all these big words, mate!"

43

CASH FROM CHAOS

Sid Vicious 1957–1979

The Sex Pistols' couldn't-play bassist

Cause of Death: Heroin overdose

Pretty, Vacant: Sid contributed nothing to the Pistols' music but everything to their legend, checking out while on bail for the murder of his girlfriend Nancy Spungen at New York's Chelsea Hotel. Actual royalties are limited to proceeds from perennial Sid single "My Way" and album tracks from unlovable exploitation albums—but value accrues from the estate's co-ownership of priceless film footage of the band, wrested from flamboyant former manager Malcolm McLaren in 1987. Sid's mom, Anne Beverley, was the initial beneficiary before she, too, OD'd in 1996. Today the estate is controlled by high-powered MGM executive Anita Camarata.

His Way: The apotheosis of punk's spiky biker look and wrecked moron shtick, Vicious has become antiestablishment shorthand, co-opted by stars as varied as Rancid's Lars Frederiksen, Avril Lavigne and Duff McKagan—who still steadfastly rocks Sid's trademark padlock-on-a-neckchain. Conversely, John "Johnny Rotten" Lydon's undignified recent foray into British reality TV has devalued the Pistols brand, while Sid wannabe Pete Doherty has rendered the affably doomed junkie archetype somewhat tired. A TV documentary, *Sid: The Last 24 Hours*, airs later this year in the U.K.

Forecast for 2006: ➔

DEAD OR NOT? TEST YOUR NECROLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE



LES PAUL

THE AXEMAN!

➔ (SEE P. 70 FOR ANSWER)



Le TIGRE

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Rick James, praying they have Soul-Glo in heaven.

42

THE WAGES OF FUNK

Rick James 1950–2004

Lyera-jumpsuited satyr

Cause of Death: Enlarged heart, pneumonia, effects of multiple drugs

He Knew From Superfreaks: James' off-stage adventures included a \$10,000-a-week coke habit and holding women hostage on two occasions, torturing one with a hot crack pipe. Unfortunately, his musical life was less sensational in later years. While his death brought some interest in the catalogue—including the hits "Super Freak" and Hammer's rap doppelganger "U Can't Touch This," both of which make money for James's daughter Ty and sons Rick Jr. and Tazman—all James's later albums tanked, and the double CD he'd been working on with Kanye West among others is as yet unreleased.

Saved by Chappelle: Comedian Dave Chappelle singlehandedly rehabilitated James's badass image with a Falstaffian characterization that made "I'm Rick James, bitch" the tagline of 2004, fueling DVD sales of Chappelle's comedy show to well over \$50 million and bringing James back into the public eye. Paramount optioned James's unpublished autobiography, *Memoirs of a Super Freak*, as a starring vehicle for Chappelle. But if neither book, film nor double CD come out, some posthumous lean years may follow James's legendary high times.

Forecast for 2006: 📈

////////////////////////////////////

41

GREAT WHITE FATHER OF THE BLUES

Alan Lomax 1915–2002

Folklorist and ethnomusicologist

Cause of Death: Complications from stroke

Old Folk's Home: Lomax is celebrated for finding and recording Muddy Waters and promoting a long list of American folk legends including Lead Belly, Woody Guthrie and Pete Seeger. Along with Harry Smith, whose folk recordings for the Smithsonian would become a touchstone for generations of serious folkies and eggheads, Lomax's work forms the spine of the recorded American folk legacy.

Life After Death: Lomax's estate got fat in recent years when his recordings were used on the soundtrack to *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* and sampled extensively on Moby's *Play*. The estate also has a rare reputation for diligence in tracking down descendants of performers to pay them royalties.

In the Vault: Lomax's catalogue of recordings is enormous, and Rounder Records has spent the last decade compiling and releasing nearly 100 CDs of his work, with plans for many more.

The Bad News: Lomax's reputation has been tarnished recently by allegations that he played down the contribution of his collaborators—particularly legendary African American scholar and musicologist John Work III—and that he stiffed Muddy Waters out of a promised \$20 recording fee.

Forecast for 2006: 📈

40

MISERY LOVES COMPANY

Elliott Smith 1969–2003

Morose indie troubadour

Cause of Death: Suicide by stabbing

Enduring Mystery: Smith was transformed from cult miserabilist into Joaquin Phoenix–endorsed doomed genius poet as details of his drug-addled final months emerged. Adding grist to the controversy mill, a Kurt-like murder theory circulates, based on medical examiner Lisa Scheinin's report that "possible defensive wounds" on his arms and hands "raise the possibility of homicide."

Life After Death: Smith's posthumous 2004 album *From a Basement on the Hill* hit the *Billboard* charts at No. 19, 80 places higher than his previous release, although super-harrowing tracks such as "Suicide Machine" were excised by Smith's complicated estate (father Gary, birth mother Bunny and Elliott's stepmother Marta).

In the Vault: A cache of twenty-two unreleased songs were leaked onto the Internet in fall 2005, fueling persistent rumors of another archive release, while Smith's contributions to the soundtrack for the film *Thumbsucker* maintain the illusion of an artist more prolific in death than in life. The inevitable tribute album, *To: Elliott From: Portland*, is slated for February 2006.

Forecast for 2006: 📈

39

RHAPSODY IN BLUES

Robert Johnson 1911–1938

Delta blues progenitor

Cause of Death: Pneumonia

Sympathy for the Devil: The myths surrounding Johnson's early death have helped build the enduring legend of the doomed blues Prometheus cursed for his gifts. The most popular story—that he sold his soul to the devil in exchange for his guitar skills—inspired the 1986 Ralph Macchio vehicle *Crossroads*.

Estate of Confusion: Johnson died with neither legitimate children nor will, leaving his recordings to an unknowing family until 1973, when the last heir, a half-sister, was located by a music historian, to whom she assigned all rights to the small estate. When Columbia's *The Complete Recordings* went platinum not long after its 1990 release, however, royalties to the estate rose to \$1.3 million and a truck driver named Claud L. Johnson emerged, claiming to be Johnson's illegitimate son. In 2000, after an eight-year hearing, he was named sole heir.

Peer Paudits: Johnson is the blues icon: Eric Clapton famously said that "his music remains the most powerful cry that I think you can find in the human voice." The White Stripes covered his "Stop Breaking Down Blues," and if you think Jack White's penchant for fedoras owes nothing to Johnson, think again.

Forecast for 2006: 📈

DEAD OR NOT?

TEST YOUR NECROLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE



ERIC CARR

NORMAL-TONGUED KISS LIEUTENANT

→ (SEE P. 70 FOR ANSWER)

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PEAS OUT!

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PICS OF THE
PHUNKADELIC

BLACK EYED PEAS

PLUS THOUSANDS MORE PHOTOS OF YOUR FAVORITE ARTISTS @BLENDER.COM

38

FREDDIE'S DEAD

Curtis Mayfield 1942–1999

Polititized soul pioneer, quadriplegic

Cause of Death: Never verified, though years of poor health had followed his paralysis after a 1990 onstage accident.

Enemy of Estate: From '60s R&B trio the Impressions through his monumental solo career, Mayfield recorded more than 100 charting singles and amassed an impressive estate. In 2003, however, Mayfield's widow Altheida successfully settled a suit to remove Marv Heiman, the artist's manager and trustee, from the family's trusts, alleging that Heiman had paid himself millions in fees and caused tax difficulties for both her and her six children.

Peer Plaudits: Mayfield's music continues to be part of hip-hop's DNA: Kanye West's recent song "Touch the Sky" is essentially Curtis's "Move On Up" with different lyrics. In 2002 Mayfield's family placed an ad in *Billboard* thanking rappers like Snoop and Jay-Z who had sampled his music (and provided a contact number, presumably to drum up more business). The same year, Heiman was quoted as saying he received five sample requests a month—each one can fetch up to \$350,000 for Mayfield's estate.

Forecast for 2006: ➔



Left Eye: "Let's weld shit!"

37

DIVA DOWN

Lisa "Left Eye" Lopes 1971–2002

TLC firebrand

Cause of Death: Car crash

Microphone Fiend: The most successful female R&B group of all time, TLC sold 22 million albums in the U.S. alone—and the rapping and maverick behavior of Lopes was what really set them apart.

On the TLC Tip: After Lopes was killed while taking a vacation in Honduras, a reported 10,000 people attended her funeral in Atlanta. Seven months later, TLC's fourth album, the well-received *3D*, was released with Left Eye's vocals on five of the tracks—and a greatest-hits CD followed the next year. The 2005 reality TV show *R U the Girl With T-Boz and Chilli* offered hopefuls the chance to perform and record with the remaining members, though emphatically not as a replacement for Lopes. A single, "I Bet," was cut with the show's winner, O'so Krispie, but failed to chart.

Coming Soon: Later this year, VH1 will show *The Last Days of Lisa Lopes*, a feature-length program including exclusive home video footage shot by the singer during her final retreat in Central America.

Forecast for 2006: ➔

36

DEAD AIR

John Peel 1939–2004

Pioneering BBC DJ

Cause of Death: Heart failure

Last Night a DJ Saved My Career: Peel was an early champion of acts from Pink Floyd to the Fall and the White Stripes. Admired by hipsters on this side of the Atlantic, he was utterly beloved in his native U.K., where the first anniversary of his final broadcast was marked by "John Peel Day"—during which the BBC devoted six hours of programming to its former employee and more than 300 concerts were held in his honor.

Life After Death: Peel's autobiography, for which he was paid \$2.6 million and which was posthumously completed by his wife, became an instant bestseller in Britain when published last fall. Many of those who benefited from the DJ's long career of patronage feature on the predictably eclectic range of Peel Sessions CDs—the latest, featuring Galaxie 500, hit stores last November—while a planned website supervised by Peel's son Tom will continue his mission of showcasing new acts.

Peer Plaudits: After news broke of Peel's death, Radiohead's Thom Yorke moaned, "Who am I going to listen to now?"

Forecast for 2006: ➔

35

THE AMERICAN SID VICIOUS

Darby Crash 1959–1980

Singer of L.A. punk act the Germs

Cause of Death: Intentional heroin overdose

Early Exit: Dying at 22, with only one album to his name, the self-mutilating star of L.A. hardcore earned the postmortem mystique of a goth Peter Pan. Although Crash blew it on the death date (John Lennon was shot 24 hours later, eclipsing Darby's newsworthiness), his timing was otherwise perfect. Neither his fledgling solo career nor brief stay in England—from which he returned looking ominously like Adam Ant—augured greatness.

Crashing In: The Germs' rep has solidified since Crash's death, thanks to Rhino's *MIA: The Complete Anthology* and shout-outs from the Red Hot Chili Peppers, Nirvana and the Offspring. But the real surge should come later this year, with the release of Rodger Grossman's *What We Do Is Secret*. Recreating Crash's gambol through L.A.'s punk scene, the film, whose music supervisor is Germs guitarist Pat Smear (lately of Nirvana and Foo Fighters), features performances by Bijou Phillips as Germs bassist Lorna Doom and Shane West (a.k.a. Dr. Ray Barnett on *ER*) as Crash himself—donning blue contacts and prosthetic chipped teeth for the role.

Forecast for 2006: ➔

DEAD OR NOT? TEST YOUR NECROLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE



PETER TOSH

RABBLEROUSING WAILER

SEE P. 70 FOR ANSWER ➔

Run-D.M.C.: In 1986, crunches hadn't yet been invented.



Jeff Buckley's audition for the role of Radio Raheem proved unsuccessful.

34

DECEASED DJ

Jam Master Jay

1965–2002

Run-D.M.C. turntablist

Cause of Death: Murder

Hip-Hop Pioneer: Despite being in one of the most important and successful hip-hop groups of all time, Jay reportedly left as much as \$500,000 in debts at the time of his shooting. The trio's biggest hits came on the small Profile Records, and they stayed with the label even after declaring bankruptcy in 1993. After Jay's death, friends and admirers—including Russell Simmons, LL Cool J and Eminem—contributed to a fund to help support his family.

Peep Plaudits: Just before his death, Missy Elliott paid tribute to Jay by sampling "Peter Piper" on "Work It." And right after his death, Adidas released a limited-edition "Run-D.M.C. Superstar" shoe and a Dr. Pepper commercial memorialized the DJ. There's little chance Run-D.M.C. itself will continue, however: The three albums released since Jay's death have all been retrospective compilations.

The Future: While the family has championed a Jam Master Jay Foundation for Music to support inner-city music programs, the DJ's murder rather than his music appears destined to keep him in the public eye, with federal prosecutors examining alleged ties between Queens gangs and the rap world.

Forecast for 2006: ↴

33

SUNKEN STONE

Brian Jones 1942–1969

Weird, druggy Rolling Stones guitarist

Cause of Death: Drowned in his swimming pool

This Could Be the Last Time: Lewis Brian Hopkins-Jones founded the Rolling Stones and steered them into their weirdest territories, but by early June 1969, the original junkie rock star was enough of a drug casualty that they booted him. A month later he was dead, and the supposed mystery of his youthful demise has continued to make him considerably more famous than, say, living ex-Stones Bill Wyman and Mick Taylor.

Baby, You're out of Time: The 2005 British biopic *Stoned* depicted Jones's death as a murder—but even if he's exhumed, as one former girlfriend has suggested, it's past the point where anyone but his fan club could care.

Time Wasn't on His Side: Jones's songwriting contribution to the Stones was minimal (a handful of co-written non-hits), and they shrugged off his influence after ditching him. His most significant musical legacy may be helping to invent the "world music" concept by producing *The Pipes of Pan at Jajouka*, a recording of Moroccan musicians issued in 1971—or maybe having the Brian Jonestown Massacre named after him.

Forecast for 2006: ↴

32

HELLO AND GOODBYE

Jeff Buckley 1966–1997

Angst-ridden indie pinup

Cause of Death: Drowning

Mystery White Boy: Buckley's otherworldly voice, moody good looks and bloodline (his dad, singer-songwriter Tim Buckley, also died young) made him a cult hero; drowning in a Mississippi riptide made him perfectly tragic. He has inspired songs by peers from Aimee Mann to Rufus Wainwright and is the industry standard for dreamy singer-songwriter comparisons.

A Prolific Afterlife: Mary Guibert, Buckley's mother and estate manager, joked that she'd become "Jeff Buckley Inc." after his death. She oversees his growing post-mortem catalogue, including three versions of his debut, *Grace*, one of them a Legacy Edition that pushed sales of the record to nearly 800,000. Buckley's archives may be limited, but Guibert's skilled repackaging keeps them fruitful. Further feeding the myth are a 2004 documentary, a thoughtful bio—recently optioned for film—and a heady book on *Grace* by Princeton prof Daphne Brooks.

Dial Jeff for Sad: Buckley's voice has become the sound of onscreen sorrow: Recently, characters have grieved to his version of Leonard Cohen's "Hallelujah" in *The West Wing*, *The O.C.*, *House* and the Nic Cage flick *Lord of War*.

Forecast for 2006: ↴

DEAD OR NOT? TEST YOUR NECROLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE



PROFESSOR GRIFF

POSSIBLY JEW-HATING PUBLIC ENEMY

(SEE P. 70 FOR ANSWER)



THE AFTERPARTY

THE COMPARATIVE THEOLOGY OF THE AFTERLIFE: FROM ALLAH TO OZZY

CHRISTIANITY

Theology: For the unrepentant, abortionists, sodomites and/or Democrats, an everlasting, fiery hell. The righteous meanwhile, will, according to the Rev. Billy Graham, spend eternity "having parties and driving the golden streets in a yellow Cadillac convertible."

Pros: Apparently, all dogs do actually go to heaven.

Cons: To be honest, Billy, we were kind of hoping for a Porsche.

ISLAM

Theology: Those who follow the Koran are rewarded in a paradise occupied by dark-eyed women "chaste as hidden pearls."

Pros: Self-explanatory. It's a miracle Gene Simmons hasn't converted already.

Cons: Scholars have suggested that the Koran has been mistranslated and that what actually awaits the devout is not a gaggle of virgins but a handful of raisins.

SCIENTOLOGY

Theology: After death, we can live in another body but with our spirit, or "thetan," intact. Convert John Travolta explains: "It could be reincarnation if that's what you choose to do. You want to get back into another body, or if you just want to hang out, whatever you feel like."

Pros: The ability to lord it over lower life forms, since Scientology "proves" man is a spiritual being and not an animal.

Cons: Increased possibility of John Travolta's eternal "thetan" making *Battlefield Earth* 2.

OZZY OSBOURNE

Theology: On the 1971 song "After Forever," Ozzy declared, "I've seen the light and I've changed my ways/And I'll be prepared ... at the end of days." After a 2003 ATV accident, he claimed to have seen "a white light shining through the darkness. But no fucking angels."

Pros: Any evidence of an afterlife is somewhat comforting.

Cons: We can't trust this guy to make toast, but we're going to trust him on this?

CLARK COLLIS

31

SAMPLE SALE

Chic

Disco hit factory

Causes of death: Bernard Edwards, bass (1952–1996): pneumonia; Tony Thompson, drums (1954–2003): cancer

Yowsah, Yowsah, Yowsah: Despite the deaths of two founding members, Chic remain a cash cow. The single "Le Freak" sold six million copies in the U.S. alone; that was frosting for Edwards and partner Nile Rodgers, who, as writers or producers, moved upwards of 100 million records by Sister Sledge, David Bowie and Duran Duran. Rodgers's 1995 Sony deal for his catalogue earned him millions; luckily, he's still breathing.

Ghosts in the Machine: The Chic vault has been hip-hop's hall closet since the Sugarhill Gang sampled "Good Times" in 1979; artists from the Beastie Boys to Joe Budden love them so much that in 2003 Rodgers was declared the most-sampled artist of all time. He and Edwards settled with the Gang after hearing "Rapper's Delight," gaining credit and a hefty royalty—and beginning the regulation of sampling. **Life After Death:** Rodgers now oversees bestselling Xbox soundtracks and is still pushing a reconstituted Chic, with a 2006 studio album in the works.

Forecast for 2006: ↗

30

THIS BYRD HAS FLOWN

Gram Parsons

1946–1973

Long-haired godfather of country rock

Cause of Death: Drug overdose

If You Gotta Go: If he had merely invented country rock and guest-starred at the early-'70s court of the Rolling Stones, Parsons would be a cult figure. But the circumstances surrounding his death—ODing at the Joshua Tree Inn, his body "stolen" from LAX by his road manager and set alight in the desert in a bungled attempt at open-air cremation—elevated him immediately into rock legend.

It's Better to Burn Out: Commercial failures at the time, Parsons's two solo albums, *GP* and *Grievous Angel*, are now considered classics. His estate is controlled jointly by his ex-wife and daughter Polly Parsons, whose proactive celebration includes two tribute albums, two legend-heavy 2004 concerts that featured Keith Richards and Norah Jones and recent "visual scrapbook"/biography, *Grievous Angel*.

Peer Plaudits: Parsons's stock has risen rapidly in the past decade, thanks to a new generation of alt-country-influenced rock acts such as Wilco. He was also the subject of an acclaimed documentary, *Fallen Angel*, and the rather less successful 2004 Johnny Knoxville movie *Grand Theft Parsons*.

Forecast For 2006: ↗

29

ELEGY FOR E

Eazy-E

1964–1995

N.W.A founder, Gangsta rap godfather

Cause of Death: AIDS-related pneumonia

Wicked Stepmother: Days before his death, Eazy (born Eric Wright) married girlfriend Tomica Woods in a bedside ceremony at Los Angeles's Cedars-Sinai Medical Center and made her CEO of his Ruthless Records and co-trustee of his estimated \$35 million estate. Less than 24 hours after Eazy's death, a Ruthless employee sued Woods for claiming wrongful ownership of Ruthless. Other women (E had nine children by seven mothers) retained lawyers to make sure E's children were taken care of after his death.

Gone but Not Forgotten: Despite Eazy's pivotal role in the late-'80s rise of Cali hip-hop, his passing didn't spark the obsessive national media remembrance that Tupac's later did. However, his hospitalization occasioned more calls to the Cedars-Sinai switchboard than any other celebrity patient, including George Burns and Lucille Ball.

Legac-E: More than 10 years after Eazy's death, there has been little in the way of new material; Ruthless released one posthumous album, a 1995 greatest-hits collection and a 2002 album/DVD. However, his oldest son, Lil Eazy-E, is prepared to carry the torch with his own album, *Prince of Compton*.

Forecast for 2006: ↗

28

THE WHITE STUFF

Barry White

1944–2003

Walrus of Love

Cause of Death: Kidney failure resulting from hypertension

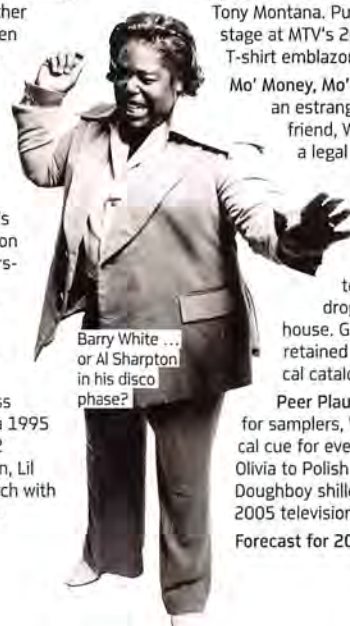
Wearing White: After 40 years of lushly orchestrated come-ons, White remains the alpha and omega of low-register seduction. Upon his demise, the mammoth loverman immediately entered the textile pantheon reserved for hip-hop's fallen heroes, receiving his place on T-shirts alongside Tupac, Biggie and Tony Montana. Puffy kicked this off by taking the stage at MTV's 2003 Video Music Awards in a T-shirt emblazoned with White's name.

Mo' Money, Mo' Problems: With nine children, an estranged wife and a longtime girlfriend, White's estate was destined for a legal quagmire. Soon after his death,

White's girlfriend of seven years filed a child-support claim against his estate, alleging that the singer had sired her month-old daughter; a year later she offered to drop the case in exchange for a house. Glodean, White's estranged wife, retained control of the estate and musical catalogue.

Peer Plaudits: Always a favorite source for samplers, White remains an ironclad musical cue for everyone from G-Unit songstress Olivia to Polish MC Kosman. Even the Pillsbury Doughboy shilled to the strains of Barry in a 2005 television spot.

Forecast for 2006: ↗



Barry White ... or Al Sharpton in his disco phase?

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27

ALWAYS AND FOREVER

Luther Vandross

1951–2005

Smooth soul loverman

Cause of Death: Complications arising from a stroke

Peer Plaudits: Vandross sold 25 million records in his lifetime, and he certainly didn't want for celebrity tributes after his death in July last year: "No one heard anyone that brought that much soul," said Mary J. Blige. His name was invoked onstage everywhere from the Live 8 concert to a New York show swiftly organized by radio station KISS-FM featuring Jaheim, Erykah Badu and Jill Scott, to the *American Idol* live tour. After a two-day wake, his funeral featured live performances from Aretha Franklin and Stevie Wonder; Usher and Patti LaBelle sang his greatest hits on *Oprah*, while an all-star tribute album, *So Amazing*, featuring Beyoncé, John Legend, Elton John and Jamie Foxx went straight into the charts at No. 4 in September 2004, selling more than 100,000 copies in its first week.

Never Too Much: Whether more Vandross-related product will be released remains to be seen, although his elevation into the pantheon of classic soul singers means his back catalogue may prove irresistible to samplers: Even before his death, his work had been utilized on tracks by Kanye West, Young Gunz and Janet Jackson.

Forecast for 2006: ⬆️

26

LONG BLACK VEILS

The Band

Sepia-toned tunesmiths

Causes of Death: Richard Manuel, vocalist (1943–1986): suicide by hanging; Rick Danko, vocalist and bassist (1943–1999): heart failure

When I Recycle My Masterpiece: Dylan's legendary former backing outfit have been well served since their 1976 breakup was marked by Martin Scorsese's concert movie *The Last Waltz*: Their back catalogue has been milked steadily via reissues and compilations, including the recent *The Band: A Musical History*, they have been the subject of several biographies and they have influenced countless bands, from the Eagles to Broken Social Scene.

Always Read the Fine Print: The Band's songs have been used in numerous film soundtracks and covered widely: There are at least 27 versions of "This Wheel's On Fire," 42 of "The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down" and 50 of "The Weight." Unfortunately for the remaining members of the band and the individual estates of Danko and Manuel, singer-guitarist Robbie Robertson took almost all of the songwriting credit and convinced all but drummer Levon Helm to sell him their publishing rights. Nowadays Robertson pals around with computer billionaire Paul Allen, while multi-instrumentalist Garth Hudson has declared personal bankruptcy three times.

Forecast for 2006: ➡️

25

DEATH AND GLORY

Joe Strummer

1952–2002

Eco-friendly Clash frontman

Cause of Death: Heart attack

Bad Timing: Strummer expired in the middle of a comeback—his new band, the Mescaleros, had great buzz, and with a Hall of Fame induction and the 25th-anniversary reissue of the Clash's *London Calling* on the calendar, a reunion was rumored. Since his death, his reputation has only grown.

Rebel Sell: By 2005, three Strummer documentaries and four biographies had joined the tide of Clash homages (Julien Temple is reportedly making another doc now). Astralwerks also reissued two obscurities—the soundtrack to the 1987 film *Walker*, and *Elgin Avenue Breakdown*, from Strummer's pre-Clash band the 101'ers—which were both well-received.

Still a Do-Gooder: Strummer still kicks ass as a social activist. His commitment to "carbon neutral" living (planting trees to compensate for greenhouse gases) inspired the memorial Rebel's Wood, a fan-funded seedling forest on the Isle of Skye. Meanwhile, his widow Lucinda established a memorial foundation to build affordable workspaces for musicians, although its first hoped-for renovation lost out to a Georgian mansion on the BBC's home-makeover show "Restoration."

Forecast for 2006: ⬆️

24

THE NAKED AND THE DEAD

Michael Hutchence

1960–1997

Priapic INXS singer

Cause of Death: Autoerotic asphyxiation

Live Fast, Die Young, Leave a Pantsless Corpse? Hutchence died while still young and good-looking, but the circumstances of his end—found hanging naked on the back of a hotel-room door, having inadvertently strangled himself while masturbating—hardly burnished his Dionysian sex-god image. Later still, more sordid details of his demise were provided in a TV documentary by his girlfriend Paula Yates.

Life After Death: INXS's polished dance-pop aged poorly in the post-grunge years, and Hutchence's death didn't help. His self-titled solo debut was posthumously released in 1999, to little fanfare.

Mystify: His family will never see any of his money, as most of the \$14 million fortune he left at his death was irretrievably lost in a collection of secret companies and trust funds set up to protect it.

Harsh reality: Hutchence's bandmates carried on as INXS without him, enlisting a series of replacements culminating in last year's reality show *Rock Star: INXS*, selecting J.D. Fortune, a 32-year-old Canadian former Elvis impersonator, as permanent vocalist.

Forecast for 2006: ⬆️

DEAD OR NOT? TEST YOUR NECROLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE



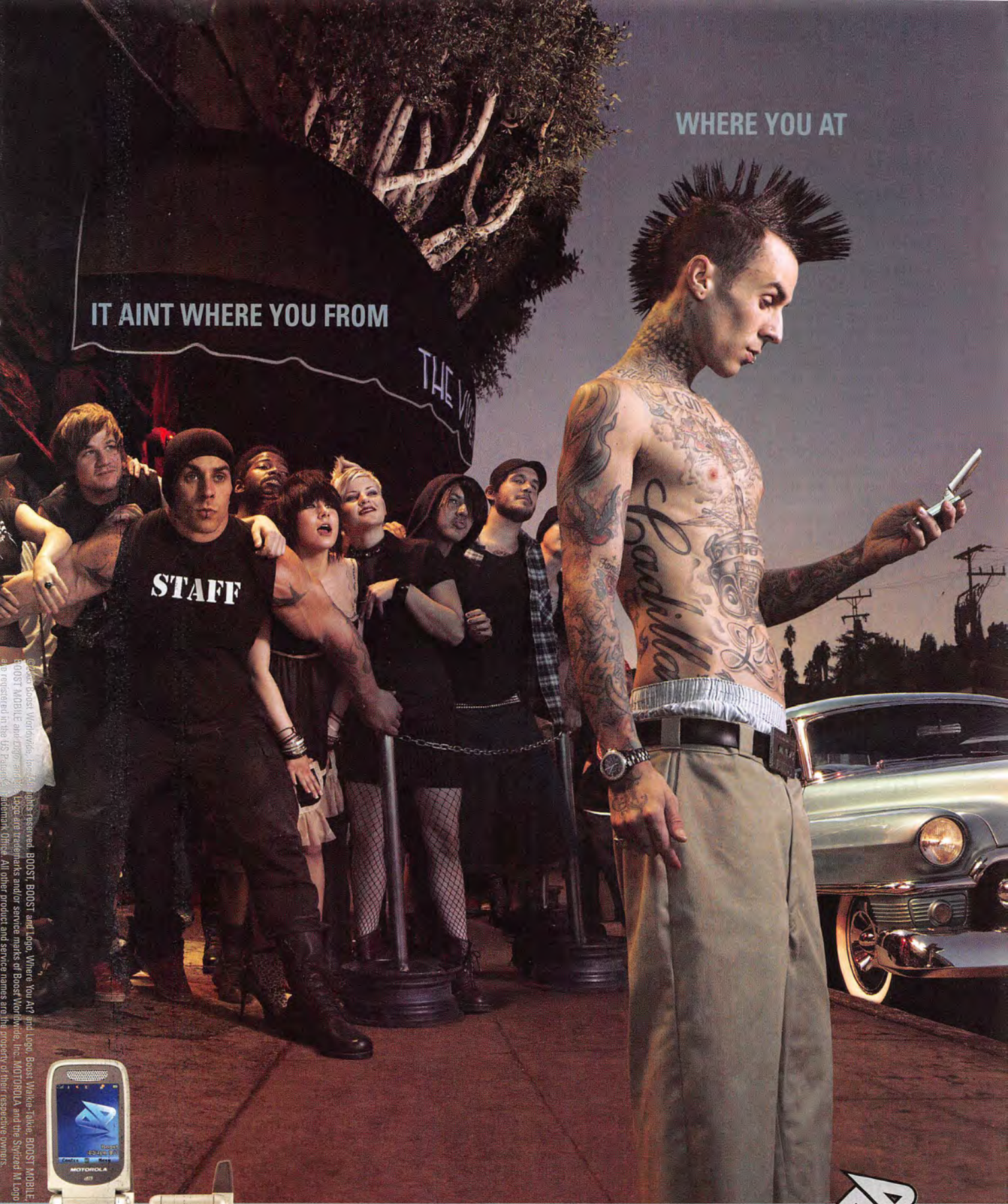
BABA OJE

REALLY OLD DUDE FROM ARRESTED DEVELOPMENT

(SEE P. 70 FOR ANSWER)

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23

DARK HORSE

George Harrison

1943–2001

Quiet Beatle and Hare Krishna

Cause of Death: Cancer

All Things Must Pass: Never the most fiscally prudent Beatle—his mismanaged film company, HandMade Films, once left him \$23 million in debt—Harrison was still worth \$245 million at his death; despite reports that half his fortune was left to the Hare Krishnas, it all went to wife Olivia and son Dhani.

Life After Death: While less aggressively marketed than John Lennon, there has been a steady stream of posthumous Harrison product: a release for his final album, *Brainwashed*, his late-'70s back catalogue digitally remastered and, most recently, a digital sprucing-up for the 1971 *Concert for Bangladesh*.

In the Vault: In death as in life, Harrison's solo achievements are dwarfed by the Beatles'. Their company, Apple, prides itself on being a model of English good taste—eschewing talk of the Beatles "brand"—but still has a packed release schedule. Since Harrison died, there have been DVD issues of the *Anthology*, *A Hard Day's Night*, *The First U.S. Visit*, *Let It Be ... Naked* and the box set *The Capitol Albums*. While Harrison's solo vault may be empty, there are plenty of Beatles projects on the way.

Forecast for 2006: ➡

ODB: Hey, Coolio called. He wants his scalp back.



22

DARK VICTORY

Ian Curtis

1956–1980

Joy Division's voice from beyond

Cause of Death: Hanged himself on a clothing rack

Ice Age: Curtis checked out after watching Werner Herzog's extra-depressing movie *Stroszek*, immediately dignifying his group's statuesque dirges with a scary seal of authenticity. A month later, posthumous single "Love Will Tear Us Apart" became Joy Division's biggest-ever U.K. hit, but his bereft bandmates (by then trading as New Order) resisted Curtis's transformation into tortured postpunk poster boy, painting the epileptic singer as a "silly bastard" who dug beer and girls.

New Dawn: Joy Division's 45 recorded songs didn't make anyone rich: not the surviving band members—whose royalties were funneled into the unsuccessful Hacienda nightclub until it went bust in 1997—nor the Curtis estate (widow Deborah and daughter Natalie). But the '90s saw a resurgence of the group as an influence on the Smashing Pumpkins, Hole, Nine Inch Nails and Moby. Deborah's weepy '95 memoir, *Touching From a Distance*, provides the basis for a Curtis biopic (provisionally titled *Control*) to be directed by Anton Corbijn this spring, while in the U.K. last year, "Love Will Tear Us Apart" was topped for the title of Best Song of the Last 25 Years only by British pop star Robbie Williams's "Angels."

Forecast for 2006: ➡

21

CRACK OF DOOM

Ol' Dirty Bastard

1968–2004

Wu-Tang wild man

Cause of Death: Heart failure brought on by drug overdose

Rusty's Wild Years: Ol' Dirty Bastard remains one of hip-hop's most original—and best-loved—talents, both for his music and for his outlaw lifestyle. Yet his death came just as he was starting to piece his career back together after years lost to drugs and prison. Work on a TV reality show and a new album had begun, but most of the material is now in limbo. Even the Wu-Tang Clan's much-anticipated tribute to Dirty, "I Go Through Life," has yet to be released, while there's an ongoing dispute over control of his estate between his mother and his widow, Icylene Jones.

Peer Plaudits: Aware the world is a less vivid place without him, hundreds attended ODB's funeral in Brooklyn, including a black-clad Mariah Carey. But efforts to turn public affection into album sales have stalled, with Damon Dash not only bungling the release of *A Son Unique*, the record ODB was working on at the time of his death, but also provoking the ire of his widow with plans to put ODB's initials on a new line of sneakers.

Forecast for 2006: ➡

20

STAYIN' ALIVE

Maurice Gibb

1949–2003

One-third of the Bee Gees

Cause of Death: Heart attack during surgery

Life After Death: The youngest Bee Gee left an estate valued at over \$60 million after his unexpected death, a figure due to be bumped up significantly in 2006. A Bee Gees stage musical, *You Win Again*, is scheduled to open simultaneously in London and New York. In addition, the Bee Gees' back catalogue reverts to their ownership in 2006: Expect to be lavished with reissues. There's also talk of a \$30 million Hollywood remake of *Saturday Night Fever*—a successful stage version is still running in London. Meanwhile, Gibb's paintball store, Commander Mo's, continues to do brisk business in Miami.

Fraternal Disharmony: It briefly seemed as if Maurice Gibb would be the recipient of two separate tribute events: Brother Barry claimed that he had been "deliberately disinvolved" in brother Robin's plans for a concert and a tribute album featuring Paul McCartney, Snoop Dogg and Beyoncé, and was planning his own separate homage. However, in December, Robin claimed that reports of the feud were untrue and that Barry would be included in any tributes.

Forecast for 2006: ➡

DEAD OR NOT? TEST YOUR NECROLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE



VICTOR WILLIS

VILLAGE PEOPLE MOTO-COP

(SEE P. 70 FOR ANSWER)



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19

PEARLY GATES

Janis Joplin 1943-1970

Southern Comfort-soaked blues shouter

Cause of Death: Heroin overdose

Pearl Jams: The tortured 28-year-old was still working on her solo debut, *Pearl*, when she OD'd in Hollywood's Landmark Hotel. Her will left her estate to her family and \$2,500 for her friends to "have a ball." Released four months later, *Pearl* topped the charts for nine weeks and yielded her biggest hit, the No. 1 single "Me and Bobby McGee." Since Joplin's death, her music has been remastered and collected on numerous greatest-hits collections and a couple of box sets; she received a Lifetime Achievement Award Grammy in 2005.

The Show Must Go On: Two biopics are currently in production. One has Pink as Janis; the other, more improbably, stars Renée Zellweger.

Like the '60s Never Happened: Joplin's back catalogue is no great money-spinner, but the throwaway anti-consumerism song "Mercedes Benz" was licensed to Mercedes for a 1995 commercial ("A hoot," said Janis's sister). Early last year, Joplin's estate announced plans for *The Search for the Pearl*, an unappealing-sounding reality TV show casting for a modern Janis along the lines of INXS's *Rock Star*, but since then things have been quiet.

Forecast for 2006: ↗



Freddie Mercury as
... Glamfire!

18

BAD AIR DAY

Ronnie Van Zant

1948-1977

Lynyrd Skynyrd leader

Cause of Death: Plane crash

Life After Death: The success of the kings of Southern rock was barely interrupted by the plane crash that killed Van Zant and devastated his band three days after the release of their sixth album. Dozens of releases followed, ranging from an excellent box set to a screed of shoddy compilations; 26 million albums have been sold and "Freebird" has been played on the radio more than two million times; this year, Skynyrd will be inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

Double Trouble: Skynyrd re-formed in 1987 with Van Zant's younger brother, Johnny, on vocals. This incarnation's albums are middling at best, but fans remain keen to hear the Ronnie-era hits live, reportedly to the tune of \$100,000 a night—of which Van Zant's estate receives a cut. Despite a legal agreement with the widows of Ronnie and guitarist Steve Gaines that the band must have at least three original members in order to use the name, after bassist Leon Wilkeson died in 2001 they continued with just two from the classic lineup.

Peer Plaudits: Van Zant's life was the basis of the Drive-By Truckers' 2001 concept album *Southern Rock Opera*.

Forecast for 2006: ↗

17

BOHEMIAN EULOGY

Freddie Mercury

1946-1991

Theatrical Queen frontman

Cause of Death: Pneumonia exacerbated by AIDS

Get Rich or Die Trying: In 1990, Queen's worth stood at \$25.9 million; in the wake of the publicity following Mercury's widely mourned demise, that figure rose to \$44 million for 1993.

The Show Must Go On: In 2002 the Queen musical *We Will Rock You* debuted in London and grossed \$60 million in its first two years, with subsequent productions following in Australia, Russia, Germany, Spain and Las Vegas. That success prompted the release of "new" Queen product, as have the live activities of the current Paul Rodgers-fronted version of the band. While the latter diminishes Queen's brand value, the personal reputation of Mercury has been enhanced, with critical opinion generally agreeing that Rodgers is unfit to wear his predecessor's crown, metaphorical or otherwise.

Peer Plaudits: Playing a Queen cover is a surefire way to please a crowd while allowing them a moment of unabashed stadium-rock flamboyance—Green Day routinely encore with "We Are the Champions"; a 2005 tribute album, *Killer Queen*, featured Sum 41 and Flaming Lips. Finally, without Freddie Mercury, the Darkness's Justin Hawkins would probably be working as a plumber.

Forecast for 2006: ↗

16

ONE-TWO-THREE DOWN

The Ramones

New York punk's original pinheads

Causes of Death: Jeffrey "Joey Ramone" Hyman, vocalist (1951-2001): lymphoma; Doug "Dee Dee Ramone" Colvin, bassist (1952-2002): fatal heroin OD; John "Johnny Ramone" Cummings, guitarist (1948-2004): prostate cancer

We're a Happy Family: Death came as blessed relief for the Ramones, cursed to tour forever thanks to perennially poor album sales and Johnny's bullying drive. Even as Da Brudders were being feted at a Thirtieth Anniversary Tribute at L.A.'s Avalon ballroom in 2004, rockdoc *End of the Century* was exposing the squabbling reality of life in the band.

Hey Ho! Let's Grow! Their debut album cost only \$6,200 to make, but the three-CD box set *Weird Tales of the Ramones* has sold 10,000 copies at \$65 a pop. The money now accrues to widows Barbara Zampini and Linda Cummings and to the estate of Joey Ramone, while surviving drummers Tommy Erdelyi and Marc "Marky Ramone" Bell earn a smattering of royalties.

Peer Plaudits: A 10-foot Johnny statue unveiled by celebrity friends Lisa Marie Presley and Vincent Gallo looms over Dee Dee's remains at the Hollywood Forever Cemetery; Joey was honored when the corner of Bowery and Second Street in Manhattan was renamed Joey Ramone Place.

Forecast for 2006: ↗

DEAD OR NOT? TEST YOUR NECROLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE



FALCO

CHISELED AUSTRIAN NEW WAVE

(SEE P. 70 FOR ANSWER)



Frank Sinatra enjoys another Joey Bishop zinger.

These boots are made for ... God knows what.



15

THE FINAL CURTAIN

Frank Sinatra 1915–1998

Leader of the Rat Pack

Cause Of Death: Heart attack

His Way: Death only enhanced the appeal of a man who had been a household name throughout his career. Most of his estimated \$200 million estate is held in private trust funds, but the rights to his music and image are split between the children from his first marriage and his fourth wife, Barbara, a former model and dancer who took issue with some of the children's sanctioned merchandising, such as the "singing" souvenir plate.

Life After Death: A seemingly endless stream of reissues has kept interest in Sinatra's music alive, but his name can sell anything: *Sinatra*, an \$8.7 million production featuring video projections of Frank in action accompanied by a 24-piece orchestra, is due to open in London in spring 2006, while an Oris Frank Sinatra watch retails at \$2,850.

Peer Plaudits: The aura of suited cool that Sinatra perfected in the early '60s continues to endure—through HBO's *The Rat Pack* and the London stage production *The Rat Pack: Live From Las Vegas*—regardless of recent, legend-tarnishing Sinatra books, including former valet George Jacobs's sex-and-Mafiosi tell-all *Mr. S* and 2005's unflattering *Sinatra: The Life*.

Forecast For 2006: ➔

14

SPINNING IN HIS GRAVE

DJ Screw 1971–2000

Innovative Houston mixmaster

Cause of Death: Heart attack induced by codeine OD

That's a Nasty Cough: Screw, a.k.a. Robert Earl Davis Jr., pioneered Houston's slo-mo "screwed" production style, tailor-made for the Houston rap scene's high of preference: chugging codeine. These days, every Dirty South record comes in a "chopped and screwed" version—and so did the last Transplants album, too ...

Nix on the Mix: Incredibly prolific, Screw created hundreds of mixtapes, which he sold out of both his record store and home. These highly influential recordings provided the DNA for the current Houston rap explosion—Mike Jones? Paul Wall? They'd be nowhere without his woozy, downtuned experiments. His cousins continue to sell his music through the record store, Screwed Up Records and Tapes, on the city's south side.

Fame Without Fortune: While Screw's bank account may be static, his legend nevertheless continues to grow: Protégés like Big Moe, Big Pokey and Lil' Flip continually sing his praises, and several of them participated in the tribute album *Forever and a Day*, while the DVD documentaries *Soldiers United for Cash* and *The DJ Screw Legacy* have brought in a little income for his family.

Forecast for 2006: ➔

13

TROUBLE MAN

Marvin Gaye 1939–1984

Suffering soul icon

Cause of Death: Shot dead by his father

From the Vault: Gaye's 23-year, velvet-voiced legacy was well-served by his death—coming in the early days of the CD revolution, it gave both Motown and CBS/Columbia all the more reason to launch a complete remaster program; in 1995, Motown followed this with the box set *The Master 1961–1984*.

Debts Get It On: Gaye's sudden, shocking murder threw his already dicey finances into further disarray. Not only did he not have a will at the time of his death but he also still owed ex-wife Anna Gordy \$293,000 from their divorce settlement, and was \$2 million in arrears for back taxes—later repaid from royalties. In 2000, Gaye's three children issued bonds against his future recording royalties, generating an eight-figure payday for the estate.

Peer Plaudits: 10,000 attended a funeral that featured Stevie Wonder singing and a reading from Smokey Robinson; many songs have been dedicated to Gaye, including Diana Ross's "Missing You" and the Commodores' "Night Shift." With no fewer than six Gaye biographies and a recent Hennessy campaign using Gaye's image from "What's Going On" as an imprimatur of urban sophistication, he remains as iconic as ever.

Forecast for 2006: ➔

DEAD OR NOT? TEST YOUR NECROLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE



BOXCAR WILLIE

AS-SEEN-ON-TV COUNTRY COOT

(SEE P. 70 FOR ANSWER)



Jim Morrison:
Yup, heroin'll
do that to you.

12

LATINA LEGACY

Selena 1971–1995

Spanish-language superstar

Cause of Death: Shot by No. 1 fan

Life After Death: More than a decade after being gunned down by her fan club president, Yolanda Saldivar, Selena's global sales and celebrity have been eclipsed by another Latino singer-cum-film-star—Jennifer Lopez, whose big break came when she played the slain singer in the biopic *Selena*. But she remains a major figure in Latin music.

The Show Must Go On: This year, 50,000 fans attended the *Selena Vive!* tribute concert in Houston, Texas, featuring Gloria Estefan and Paulina Rubio. At more than three hours long, it became the highest-rated and most-viewed Spanish-language show in U.S. television history, adding a substantial boost to sales of her back catalogue (around 20 posthumous collections have been released to date) and other merchandise, which includes a Selena doll, Selena perfume and Selena baseball caps in rhinestone and leopard-print.

Mas Selena: There are plans for a Selena stage musical to open in Mexico City, and while the Selena boutique in San Antonio has closed and plans to open another in Monterrey were shelved, the branch in her Texas hometown of Corpus Christi—and the Selena museum there—continue to do business.

Forecast for 2006: ➔

11

THIS ISN'T THE END

Jim Morrison 1943–1971

Doors singer; Lizard King

Cause of Death: Suspected heroin overdose

Wallow in the Mire: Morrison's memory has sustained considerable abuse since his interment in Paris's Père Lachaise cemetery. Nonetheless, Doors drummer John Densmore has refused multimillion-dollar offers for use of Doors music in ads—against protests from keyboardist Ray Manzarek and guitarist Robby Krieger, who enlisted ex-Cult singer Ian Astbury to fill Morrison's leather trousers in a 2002 tour as Doors of the 21st Century. A suit from Densmore and Morrison's estate (the parents of Morrison and of his late wife Pamela Courson) forced a name change—to "D21C."

Touch Me, Jay-Z: The Doors didn't become massive until 1979, when "The End" was featured in *Apocalypse Now*. After 1980, Morrison bio *No One Here Gets Out Alive* became a bestseller, and a greatest-hits album sold 2 million copies. Interest remained steady until spiking at Oliver Stone's Val Kilmer-starring *The Doors*, which dealt a near-lethal blow to Morrison's dark aura by co-starring Meg Ryan. Redemption came in 2001, when Jay-Z's "Takeover" built its ominous momentum on a sample of the Doors' "Five to One."

Forecast for 2006: ➔

10

NO LONGER HITTING THE ROAD, JACK

Ray Charles 1930–2004

Pioneering legend of soul, gospel, country, blues, jazz and most points in between

Cause of Death: Complications from liver disease

Charles in Charge: Charles's posthumous plaudits were both lengthened and amplified by the release, four months after his death, of the highly successful biopic *Ray*, which reminded audiences worldwide of the singer's genre-hopping talent, amazing rags-to-riches story—and also of his womanizing, heroin-injecting ways.

Get Rich or Die Tryin': Charles' 2002 CD, *Thanks for Bringing Love Around Again*, didn't even chart, but after his death the duets CD *Genius Loves Company* hit *Billboard*'s No. 1, sold more than 3 million copies and earned him eight posthumous Grammys. In September 2005, Rhino Records released another duets CD, *Genius & Friends*, and a 146-track box set, *Pure Genius*. The following month, Charles appeared on *Forbes*'s list of the Top-Earning Dead Celebrities, with an income of \$7.88 million.

Ray Charles on Their Mind: Last year, residents of Tampa, Florida, objected to a plan to rename a street after Charles, suggesting that, since the neighborhood was already rife with drug dealers, associating it with a former smack addict probably wasn't going to help much.

Forecast for 2006: ➔

DEAD OR NOT? TEST YOUR NECROLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE



PETE DOHERTY

KATE-MOSS-CORRUPTING, HEROIN-INHALING BRIT ROCKER ➔ (SEE P. 70 FOR ANSWER)

GUEST LIST

COMPETITIONS, EVENTS
AND OTHER FUN STUFF
WE THOUGHT YOU
SHOULD KNOW ABOUT



NINTENDO FUSION TOUR AFTER PARTY

In fall 2005, Nintendo hit the road with another successful Nintendo Fusion Tour featuring the chart-topping band **Fall Out Boy** as well as **Panic!** at the Disco, **Motion City Soundtrack**, **Boys Night Out** and **The Starting Line**. The tour hit 43 cities and featured interactive gaming in concert venue lobbies.

The sold-out tour was celebrated in San Francisco and Chicago, Fall Out Boy's hometown, where Blender and Nintendo invited local tastemakers and band members to the official after parties. Guests enjoyed Sparks energy drink, complimentary cocktails and swag from Blender, Nintendo and Dentyne Ice.



Guests enjoy Sparks energy drink



Fall Out Boy and guests rockin' out

FAKTION



FAKTION

Meet the Most Popular Band You've
Never Heard of...Yet.

Debut Album In Stores March 21

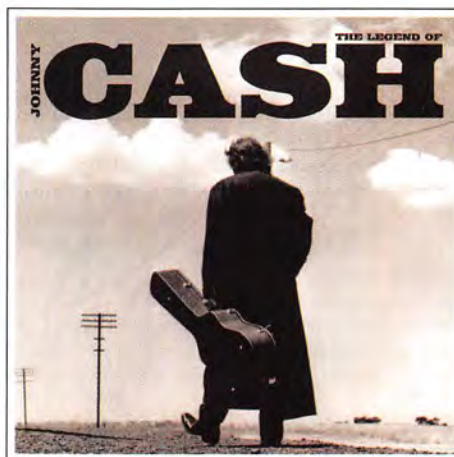
faktionband.com
roadrunnerrecords.com
myspace.com/faktiondallas



FAKTION

THE LEGEND OF JOHNNY CASH

Johnny Cash passed away at age 71 on September 12, 2003, but his legend lives on. The first album to span his entire career, from 1955 to 2003, **The Legend of Johnny Cash** (Island/Sony BMG/American/UMe), released in October 2005, led into the premiere of **Walk The Line**, the 20th Century Fox film based on his early years and starring Joaquin Phoenix and Reese Witherspoon. Featuring 21 of his recordings on the Sun, Columbia, Island and American Recordings labels, **The Legend of Johnny Cash** is the first compilation to include his work on American. Also highlighting the package is a 16-page deluxe booklet with photos and an essay by author Rich Kienzle.



9

MARLEY'S GHOST

Bob Marley 1945–1981

The first Third World superstar

Cause of Death: Brain, lung and liver cancer

Print the Legend: Reggae's heavyweight champion had to wait for death to make him a U.S. superstar. The week he was diagnosed with cancer, he played Madison Square Garden—opening for the Commodores. But the posthumous collection *Legend* has sold more than 17 million copies worldwide; his estate, controlled by his widow, Rita, and his 11 children, earns some \$6 million a year; and his catalogue has been assessed at a value of \$100 million.

No Woman, No Cry: Shortly after Marley's death, widow Rita unknowingly signed away numerous rights to his \$30 million estate and had to spend millions in lawsuits to establish herself and Marley's children as sole controllers of his name and likeness. But Rita now controls a record company, museum, guided tours, a music festival and several foundations.

Life After Death: Universal, which owns Marley's work on Island, has recently purchased his earlier Jamaican catalogue, and a new edition of the definitive biography, *Catch a Fire*, is about to be published. Yet beyond the faithful, the forecast is cloudy: recent projects intended to introduce Marley to new listeners have been duds.

Forecast for 2006: ➔



The Jamaican version of *Reservoir Dogs* never took off.

8

HE DID HAVE A GUN

Kurt Cobain 1967–1994

Reluctant spokesman for a generation

Cause of Death: Suicide

Dough From Woe: Worth less than \$1 million when he died, Cobain's future royalties were valued at \$100 million.

Smells Like Mean Spirit: Posthumous Nirvana releases have been dogged by undignified wrangling over Nirvana LLC, the partnership established by widow Courtney Love, drummer Dave Grohl and bassist Krist Novoselic to control the band's musical legacy. While 1994's *Unplugged in New York* and the live compilation *From the Muddy Banks of the Wishkah* proved no problem, the band's final studio track, "You Know You're Right," emerged on a 2002 greatest-hits set only in return for Love's handing over some demos for use on the box set *With the Lights Out*.

Kurt on Camera: While the documentary *Kurt & Courtney* investigated conspiracy theories surrounding Cobain's death, Gus Van Sant's *Last Days*—a meandering account of the death of a junkie rock idol called Blake, loosely based on Cobain—might have been more to Kurt's taste.

Dear Diary: In 2002, Love received a reported \$4 million for the rights to publish Cobain's journals, even though one entry cites "the rape of my personal thoughts" as Cobain's reason for his dislike of fame.

Forecast for 2006: ➔

7

A LONG, STRANGE, TRIP

Jerry Garcia 1942–1995

Bearlike Grateful Dead leader

Cause of Death: Heart attack after years of heroin addiction

The Dead Bill Gates: Garcia's estate, valued at \$9.9 million at his death, generates millions more annually through recordings, artwork and licensed goods—from area rugs to Clos du Blois's J. Garcia wine.

Celebrity Deathmatch: Garcia's estate has been viciously contested by ex-wives, lovers and pals. Captain Trips was posthumously sued by his personal trainer as well as by an acupuncturist, his office manager and a guy who said he babysat him during bad acid trips.

Noodlers Unite: Garcia inspired the entire jam band counterculture, which spawned Dave Matthews and Phish, as well as the worst band names ever, from String Cheese Incident to the Disco Biscuits.

Make It Stop: Beyond the usual icon's legacy—three biographies, a new biopic project improbably produced by *Malcolm in the Middle* actor Justin Berfield—the homegrown Garcia recording industry stands as an ideal for post-mortem stardom. The Dead recorded just about everything, with no concerts alike, and the stock of unreleased Dead recordings is valued as high as \$400 million, including a catalogue of 500 Garcia solo concert recordings.

Forecast for 2006: ➔

6

SCUSE ME WHILE I KISS THE SKY

Jimi Hendrix 1942–1970

Left-handed guitar genius

Cause of Death: Choked on own vomit after barbiturate OD

Life After Death: Hendrix's recording career lasted less than four years, but it's still among the zeniths of electric-guitar playing. But self-appointed "musical curator" Alan Douglas diluted his legacy by releasing album after album of outtakes, unfinished tapes and live recordings for several decades.

The Vault: In the '90s, Hendrix's late father, Al, and stepsister Janie, funded by Microsoft co-founder Paul Allen, successfully sued for control of the Hendrix archives. They formed the company Experience Hendrix and have kept a tight rein on the catalogue, raking in over \$50 million from album sales, merchandise and ads from Pepsi and Audi. By 2001, Hendrix—worth only \$500,000 when he died—was No. 5 on *Forbes* magazine's list of the top-earning dead celebrities. He has since dropped out of the Top 10, and in 2004, Janie was unsuccessfully sued by Jimi's younger brother Leon, who had been written out of their father's will.

Lasting Legacy: His "Star Spangled Banner" has become audio shorthand for the '60s, and there have been a pile of Hendrix biographies, but Andre 3000's planned Hendrix biopic seems to have fallen through.

Forecast for 2006: ➔

DEAD OR NOT?

TEST YOUR NECROLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE



SYD BARRETT

PINK FLOYD NUTCASE

(SEE P. 70 FOR ANSWER)



POWERED BY
SPARKS
ALC/ENERGY DRINK

5

FALLEN IDOL

John Lennon 1940–1980

Onetime Beatle; anthemic activist

Cause of Death: Murdered by stalker Mark Chapman
Shot You Down: Chapman said in 2004 that in killing Lennon he intended "to steal [his] fame." But death proved the genesis of the Lennon myth, and the Lennon business: His estate earned \$22 million in 2005 alone.

Oh, Yoko: Lennon's profile is sustained both by continuing public fascination and the hands-on management of his musical legacy by his widow, Yoko Ono. Immediately after his death, the single "(Just Like) Starting Over" and the album it was taken from, *Double Fantasy*, reached No. 1 in the *Billboard* charts. His name has since been attached to everything from children's toys (the "Real Love" range based on his sketches of animals) to Liverpool's John Lennon Airport (slogan: "Above us only sky").

Peer Praises: His violent death cemented Lennon's status as a counterculture icon—in spite of biographies that depict his last years as a tangle of drug addiction, self-doubt and an obsession with numerology. Hollywood is now taking an interest with *Chapter 27*, starring Jared Leto as Mark Chapman. The producers might hope it fares better than *Lennon*, the Yoko-endorsed Broadway musical that closed in September 2005 after just six weeks.

Forecast for 2006: ➔



John Lennon leaves ticket to ride in other pants.

4

MARKED FOR DEATH

Tupac Shakur

1971–1996

Original gangsta

Cause of Death: Murdered in a drive-by shooting

Life After Death: In death, Tupac became a T-shirt and poster icon—hip-hop's answer to James Dean—and one of the biggest earners in music. In 2003 his estate brought in \$12 million, a stark contrast to the \$150,000 in his bank account when he was shot.

America's Most Wanted: Tupac released just four albums in his lifetime—but at least 14 have appeared since then. Before his death, he had recorded an estimated 200 unreleased tracks, which are now controlled by his mother, Afeni Shakur. Although many of these releases fall well below the standards Tupac himself set, recent Eminem-assisted albums *Resurrection* and *Loyal to the Game* sold more than 1 million copies each.

Peer Praises: Tupac looms large over the generation of rappers who followed him: Eminem says he's "the greatest songwriter who ever lived." His mother has also sought to glorify his name, founding the Tupac Amaru Shakur Center for the Arts in Stone Mountain, Georgia. Currently offering dance, vocal and yoga classes, a seven-foot bronze statue of her son stands in the gardens.

Forecast For 2006: ➔



Tupac finds a gangsta way to hide his male-pattern baldness.

3

THE WHOPPER

Elvis Presley

1935–1977

Singer, King of Rock & Roll

Cause of Death: Heart attack

Get Dead and Start Earning: Culturally, the King's real reign was a mere 18 months—from 1956 to '57. Dead, he earns 10 to 20 times more than he did alive: With licensing, merchandising and CD sales (including three recent box sets and a No. 1 hits CD), the Elvis industry is worth \$45 million a year.

Life After Death: Gruesome narcotic and dietary details of the King's twilight years emerged around his demise, later followed by Albert Goldman's muck-raking biography. But more recent critical reassessments like Peter Guralnick's scholarly two-volume study have redeemed Elvis's artistic legacy. Graceland draws 600,000 pilgrims a year; there are 500 active fan clubs and 35,000 professional impersonators; and several organized religions have formed around Elvis, including the First Presleyterian Church of Elvis the Divine.

King, Inc.: Elvis's estate was managed by his sole heir, Lisa Marie Presley, but in 2004 she sold 85% of his assets to sports- and music-promoting kingpin Robert F.X. Sillerman. He plans to probe Europe, Australia and Japan to find new markets for Elvis, the blue-chip stock of dead rockers.

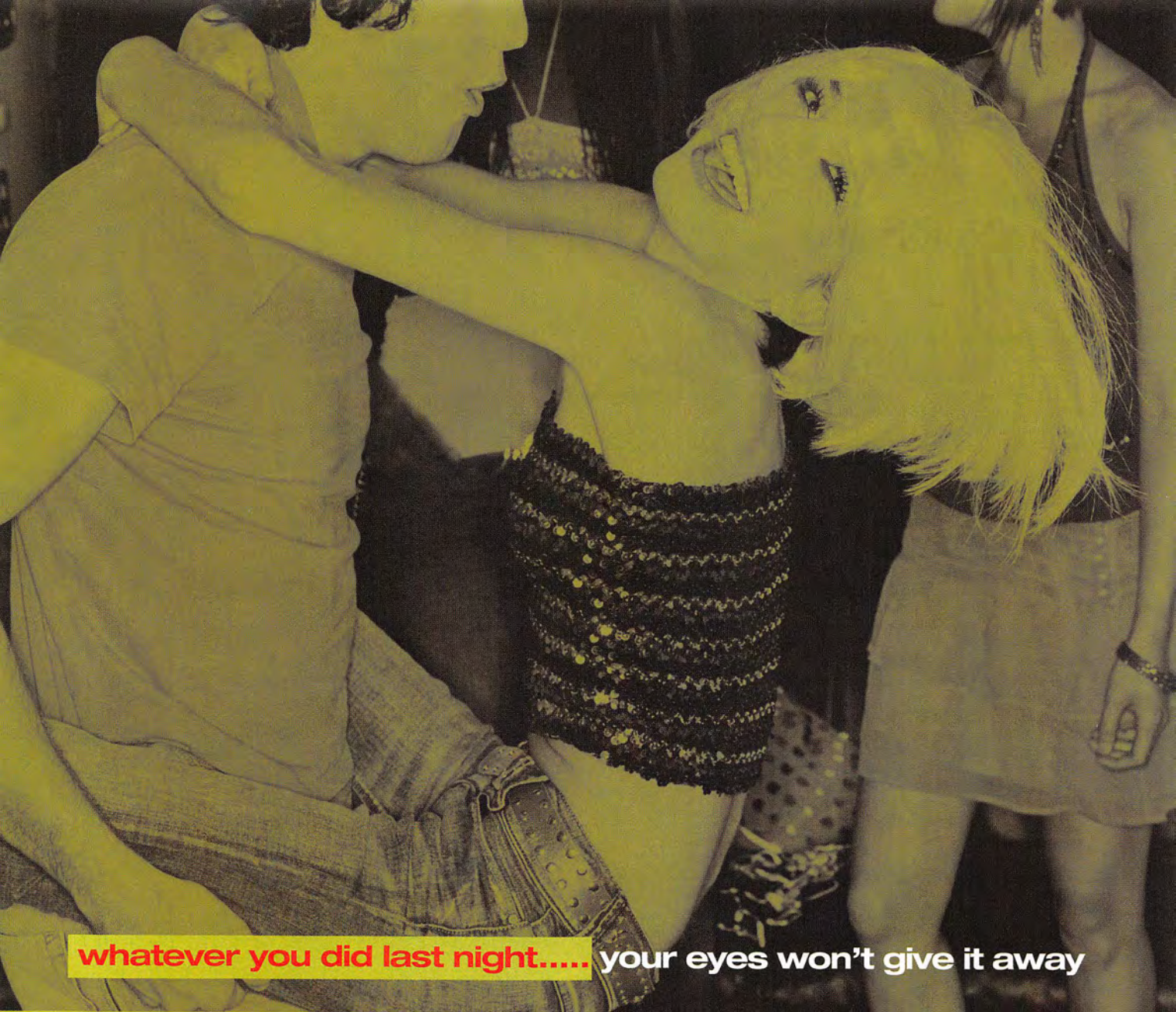
Forecast for 2006: ➔

DEAD OR NOT? TEST YOUR NECROLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE



MICK SHRIMPTON

FOURTH DRUMMER FOR BEST BAND EVER, SPINAL TAP ➔ (SEE P. 70 FOR ANSWER)



whatever you did last night..... your eyes won't give it away

experience ROHTO



TM



Cooling, Redness Relief for Eyes
fast, cool, different

2

READY TO DIE

The Notorious B.I.G.

1972–1997

Heavyweight rap icon

Cause of Death: Shot in a drive-by shooting in Los Angeles

Larger Than Life: He was hailed as the finest rapper of his generation thanks to his keen eye for detail and lyrical virtuosity, and even in death Biggie's reputation matched his near-400-pound physical presence. The posthumous *Life After Death* entered the album charts at No. 1 and went on to sell more than 10 million copies.

Death Wish: While his rival Tupac achieved a kind of martyrdom, Biggie's demise left only thoughts of what might have been. He didn't leave the comprehensive vault of unfinished tracks Tupac did, and while 1999's *Born Again* sold almost 2 million copies, it didn't approach his best work. But although the recent *Duets* collection is subtitled "The Final Chapter," Bad Boy Records recently announced the extension of Biggie's musical legacy—into a collection of specially created cellphone ringtones.

Peer Plaudits: Biggie was an inspiration to the next generation of New York rappers—Jay-Z paid due homage by sampling "Juicy" on *The Blueprint 2's* "A Dream." His mother has also fought almost single-handedly to keep his memory alive, setting up the charitable Christopher Wallace Memorial Foundation, publishing a memoir, *Biggie*, and—most intriguingly—announcing plans for a movie treatment of her son's life by *Training Day* director Antoine Fuqua.

Forecast For 2006: ↗



Biggie: "See? Smoking is cool!"



Johnny Cash: "Let's hurry. I've got a booty call with Reese Witherspoon."

JIM MARSHALL

1

BLACK CELEBRATION!

Johnny Cash

1932–2003

Country's eternal outlaw

Cause of Death: Complications due to diabetes

Cashing In: The career resurgence that began in 1993 when Tom Petty told Rick Rubin that he should record Cash for his American Recordings label has been uninterrupted by the death of the Man in Black, his image now frozen forever as the noble sufferer in the award-winning video for "Hurt." Rubin's *Unearthed* box set surfed the immediate sympathy wave, but more than two years later the deceased Cash thrives as a touchstone of cool. The Oscar-catnip biopic *Walk the Line* does a good job of sexing up the craggy Cash and his late wife June while boosting the early music, and a recent career-spanning comp, *The Legend of Johnny Cash*, has become a chart staple. Wisely, daughters Rosanne, Tara, Kathleen and Cindy and son John knocked back a 2004 idea from Preparation H, who wanted to use Cash's 1963 hit "Ring of Fire" in their advertising—a business opportunity Cash might have grabbed at his mid-'80s Columbia nadir, when he thought nothing of recording songs like "The Chicken in Black."

Cash Cow: Cash's stock is now so high, Rubin can use the still-unreleased *American V*, the last volume of Cash-recorded material he has in the vault, as collateral against which to renegotiate American's contract with Universal. Now due sometime in 2006 after more than 12 months' delay, tracks will likely include "First Corinthians 5:55" and, aptly, "Ain't a Grave Can Hold Me." Expect a double.

Forecast for 2006: ↗

Answer Key

JOHN STEVENS: Not dead; LES PAUL: Not dead (but he is 90); ERIC CARR: Dead (cancer); PETER TOSH: Dead (shot); PROFESSOR GRIFF: Not dead; BABA OJE: Not dead; VICTOR WILLIS: Not dead; FALCO: Dead (car accident); BOXCAR WILLIE: Dead (leukemia); PETE DOHERTY: Not dead (yet); SYD BARRETT: Not dead; MICK SHRIMPTON: Dead (spontaneous combustion)



Dear Superstar

INSIDER

YOU SEND QUESTIONS, WE GET ANSWERS

REVEREND

RUN

WE SHOW UP AT RUN'S
HOUSE (WHOSE HOUSE?)
TO GRILL TV'S PREACHIEST
DAD SINCE THAT NERD
ON 7TH HEAVEN

BY STEVE KANDELL
PHOTOGRAPHY BY RAINER HOSCH

➤ **"JUSTINE, THAT TOOTSIE** Roll's one point!" The Reverend Run—formerly Joseph Simmons of Hollis, Queens, formerly one-third of the most influential hip-hop act in history, Run-D.M.C., currently the vestment-wearing patriarch of the new MTV hit *Run's House*—is chiding his wife for squandering precious Weight Watchers points on candy. Currently shooting its sophomore season, the show establishes the rap-legend-turned-minister as a tough but fair father of five bickering children. Think Ozzy without the brain damage but with, as *Blender* learns immediately upon entering the Simmons' sprawling New Jersey home, an incontinent Maltese named Pal that would make Sharon Osbourne melt.

With 30 million albums sold, Run-D.M.C. retired following the still-unsolved murder of their DJ, Jason "Jam Master Jay" Mizell, in 2002, leaving the Rev. to redefine the term "Father knows best."

"I'm raising my family in a real cool way," Run says, summoning *Blender* to the kitchen. No, we're not in trouble, although he sure makes it sound that way—but we may be once we're done bombarding him with questions submitted by you, the readers.

YOU'VE SAID YOU WERE SUICIDAL IN THE LATE '80S. HOW CLOSE DID YOU COME, AND WHAT PULLED YOU BACK FROM THE BRINK?
SCARVER, BILOXI, MS

It was around '89 or '90. People don't understand, depression is clinical. People think, "The guy has everything, why would he want to kill himself?" But your mind is messed up, it's missing something. I went as far as getting poison and pouring it into a Coca-Cola

can but never drinking it. I'd look out a hotel room window and say, "I'm not jumping out of there." Everything I considered, I'd think, "That's gonna hurt." And I deeply wanted to kill myself. But they were fake attempts. Then around '91 I started going to church, and this is what it developed into.

ON YOUR SHOW, YOU SEEM MORE COMPETITIVE THAN YOUR KIDS, AND EVEN ELBOWED YOUR SON IN THE FACE DURING A BASKETBALL GAME. DO YOU THINK THAT'S UNSPORTSMANLIKE?
DAN_KAR73, LOS ANGELES

He ran into my elbow. I mostly get a great response about how I raise my kids. I've got a 90% approval rating.

DESCRIBE A TYPICAL NIGHT IN QUEENS WHEN YOU WERE JUST STARTING OUT AS A RAPPER.
MARYMARY, DAYTONA, FL

I did one show at a roller-skating rink. I was 14 or 15 years old—people would come to see Kurtis Blow, then get the added attraction of seeing this young kid rap. There was maybe a little breakdancing, colored Lee jeans. Burgundy jeans, that was important.

DO YOU BELIEVE IN EVOLUTION?
OLDSKOOL66, LITTLETON, CO

Nah. The Holy Ghost made us humans and made the dinosaurs and made the mosquitoes. I don't believe a monkey happened to have turned into a man. I don't believe that.

WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST RHYME?
MAD_MIKE, DECATUR, IL

My first-ever rhyme was stolen. Back in 1978 or '79, everyone was kind of sharing. There weren't any rap records out yet, so nobody cared, nobody knew. And I took mine from [legendary New York hip-hop pioneer] DJ Hollywood: "Do it, do it/Ain't nothin' to it/It's Run, y'all/With the disco fluid."

WHAT'S THE MOST EXTRAVAGANT THING YOU'VE EVER BOUGHT?
MCKIRK, SAUGERTIES, NY

I bought my bishop a Phantom and myself a Phantom. Two Rolls-Royces in one year. But I bought the bishop's first, that's important.

ARE YOU MAD ABOUT GRANDMASTER FLASH BEING PASSED OVER FOR THE ROCK AND ROLL HALL OF FAME THIS YEAR?
T. NEIMAN, MILWAUKEE

The Hall of Fame jerked him. But I'm not mad. I don't have time to be mad, I'm too much of a metaphysicist. Everything happens for a reason. Just relax, you'll get yours, everything that's supposed to come to you will come, guaranteed. Nobody can steal nothing in the universe because it's all God's big pocket—you can take it and run real fast, but you're running on God's earth. ➔



"Dear Lord: Please
don't put us on
opposite Lost."



SINCE 1548
RUMS of
PUERTO RICO
 RUM CAPITAL OF THE WORLD

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D.M.C. calls for five more gold rope chains.



DO YOU THINK TODAY'S HIP-HOP PROMOTES UN-CHRISTIAN VALUES?

HEFFALUMP, BRIDGEPORT, CT

I'm not a judging type of guy. It's all God's backyard. If he wanted to shut down weed and homosexuality, he could do it. So I'm not taking a stance against profanity, I'm not taking a stance against drugs. I'm into hip-hop. I'm just here doing what I can to promote good values, like be on a TV show as a happy guy raising a family.

WHERE WERE YOU THE FIRST TIME YOU HEARD YOURSELF ON THE RADIO?

JMJ_LIVES, ROME, NY

At my house late one night, "It's Like That" was on "Mr. Magic's Rap Attack" on WBLS. My thoughts: How many people in this world just heard that? And did they change the station?

WHOSE IDEA WAS IT TO REMAKE "WALK THIS WAY" WITH AEROSMITH?

AAA66, HELENA, MT

It definitely wasn't Aerosmith's idea; they didn't even know who we were. We used to rap over the "Walk This Way" beat, and Rick Rubin walked in and said we should just make the whole record over. I was like, "What is this hillbilly gibberish?" I had no idea what they were singing about, and we didn't want all those loud guitars; we just wanted the beat and a little bit of the riff. Aerosmith got as high as they possibly could and then were falling off, so maybe we were part of God's plan to give them a boost. But we just lit a match under a firecracker that was gonna explode anyway. People say that started rap-rock, but "Rock Box" and "King of Rock" came before that and they were on MTV, too. "Walk This Way" was just the pop hit.

WHAT'S THE CRAZIEST THING YOU'VE EVER DONE IN A HOTEL ROOM?

PETER_PIPER, MCKEESPORT, PA

Me and D.M.C. woke up, looked at a warm 40-ounce bottle of beer, poured it into a bucket of ice and walked down the hallway drinking straight out of the Hilton bucket. I've done far stupider things in hotel rooms, but this is as far as I'm gonna let you know. That is the answer that Run should be telling you now, as a reverend.

WHO WAS THE FIRST PERSON YOU EVER SAW WEAR SNEAKERS WITHOUT LACES?

NELEMAN, TOLEDO, OH

Some dude in Hollis who just got out of jail. He had the laces around his neck and looked extremely cool, like, "I'll put 'em in later." But he never put 'em in later. It's like wearing your pajamas to work or something. That's the first I saw, but it was definitely a jail thing.



The pastor's flock, clockwise from top: Angela, Diggy, Russell Jr., the Rev., Vanessa, JoJo, Justine.

WHAT ARE THE THREE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS YOU TRY TO TEACH YOUR CHILDREN?

RYAN_K, CHARLESTON, MO

Be thankful, number one. Learn to be content, number two. Talk to God, number three. Have a conversation with God and wait for a response.

RUN-D.M.C. ONCE FILED FOR BANKRUPTCY—HOW DID YOU LOSE YOUR MONEY, AND HOW DID YOU GET IT BACK?

JOMON78, CANYON LAKE, CA

We were having contractual problems that made us unable to take care of what we had to take care of. It was just business, the way Trump goes bankrupt every time he has a casino problem. Only rich people go bankrupt—we weren't broke. You do what your accountants say is best to get out of it.

WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME YOU WATCHED YOUR 1988 MOVIE TOUGHER THAN LEATHER?

BEASTIE_BOI, CARBONDALE, IL

The day it came out. We filmed it ourselves—how terrible is it? That is a dumb, dumb movie. But we thought we were doing something.

ARE YOU STILL IN TOUCH WITH DARRYL "D.M.C." MCDANIELS?

J. FLAN, ROCHESTER, MI

Just talked to him. But we're retired now. I'm not trying to relive what we did in the '80s. That was a beautiful time, but it's over.

WHAT'S YOUR BIGGEST VICE?

KING_OF_ROCK, COLUMBIA, MO

Ice cream. Used to be weed, now it's ice cream.

ARE YOU MAKING OSBOURNES MONEY YET?

MRIDLEY, SOUTH PORTLAND, ME

I'm not saying that. We just got picked up for a second season, we have a hit show, it has great ratings. But I haven't seen the Osbournes' contract. There's your answer.

YOU END EVERY EPISODE OF RUN'S HOUSE IN THE TUB. WHAT'S THE SECRET TO A GREAT BUBBLE BATH?

QUEENSLOVE, FOREST HILLS, NY

I only put the bubbles in so you don't see me naked. But I use sacred mixed oils by the prophet E. Bernard Jordan. I take spiritual baths. [BLENDER]

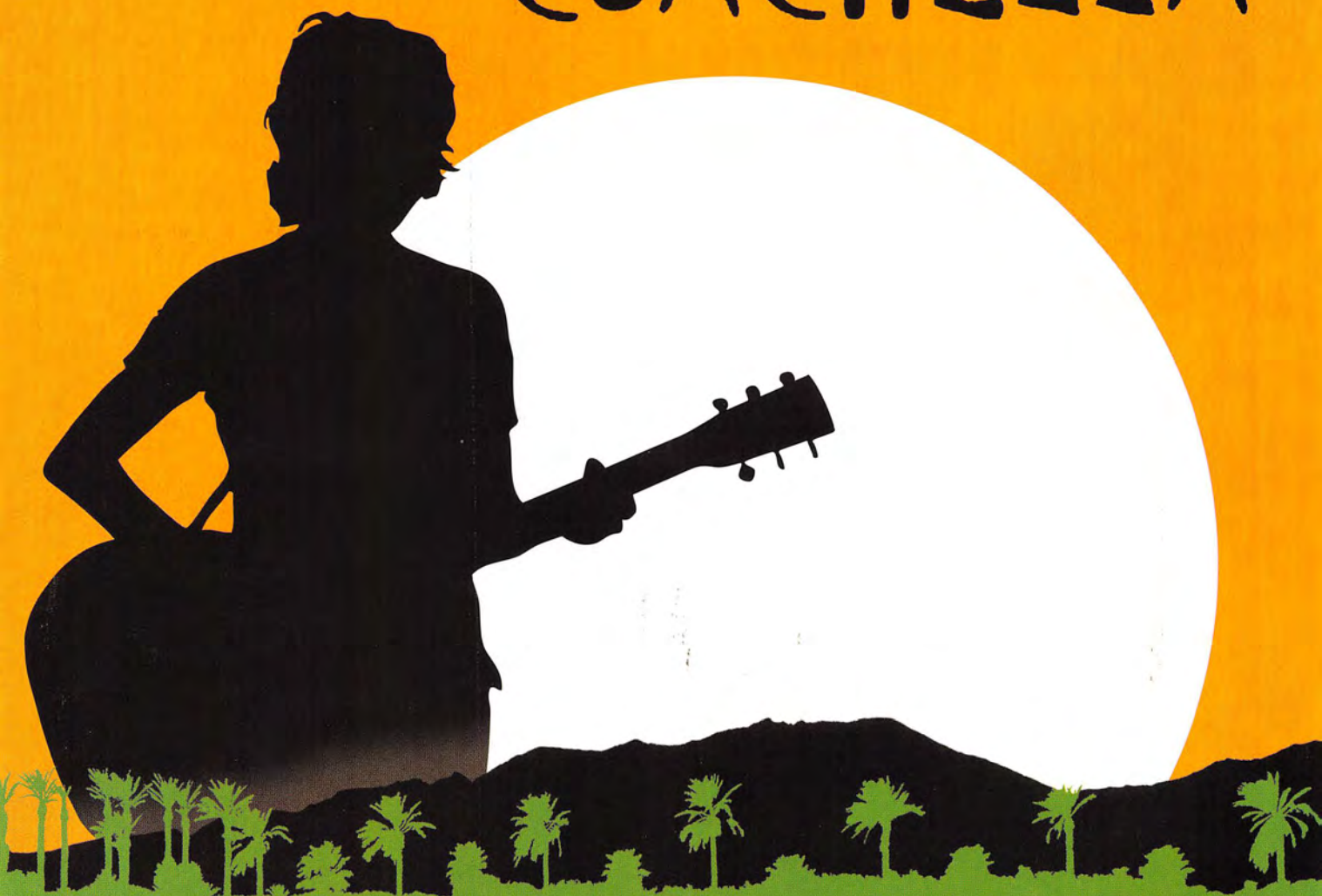


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BLENDER EXPLORES THE FINEST TUNES IN HISTORY



BY 1979, ROCKERS had declared an all-out war on disco. "Disco Sucks" became a rallying cry, as punk bands—resentful of disco's perceived soullessness and wary of the gay and black subcultures that embraced it—cranked out singles with titles like "Kill the Bee Gees" and "Disco Zombies." That summer, a mob of rock & roll hardliners bombed and burned disco records at the White Sox's Comiskey Park at a "Disco Demolition Night," filling the Chicago sky with the smoke of obliterated Village People LPs.

So the disco haters got a shock when a punk group topped the charts the week of April 28 with a shimmering dance number built around the pitter-patter of a drum machine and Kraftwerk-inspired synthesizers. Blondie were bigger disco fans than doctrinaire new wavers were supposed to be. Still, they didn't expect "Heart of Glass" to be their breakthrough—and they almost didn't record it at all.

"Everyone in the States was like, 'Blondie's gone disco,'" drummer Clem Burke remembers. Actually, they'd been there all along, at least in part: "We all used to hang out at Club 82 in New York, which was essentially a gay disco. And in the early days, we used to play songs like 'Lady Marmalade' and 'I Feel Love.'"

"We'd had 'Heart of Glass' kicking around for a while," says singer Deborah Harry. She and guitarist Chris Stein, the couple (in those days) who led Blondie, aren't quite sure when they wrote the song—it might have been 1973, in the Stilettos, or 1974, when they were calling themselves Angel and the Snakes.

The first recording of "Heart of Glass," then known simply as "The Disco Song" or "Once I Had a Love," was a demo they cut in 1975 that sounds almost nothing like the familiar version. "It wasn't very developed at first," Stein admits. The riff and shuffling rhythm owe a lot to "Rock the Boat" and Shirley & Company's "Shame, Shame, Shame"—another disco hit Blondie covered onstage early on.

The band found its most devoted early audience at the grotty club CBGB, opening for the likes of the Ramones and Television—although they were considerably cuter, especially Harry. Caught up in the punk scene, Blondie never got around to "The Disco Song" on either of their rather more rough-edged first two albums, but in early 1978 they recorded another demo that features one of "Heart of Glass"'s great gimmicks: the instrumental bridge skips a beat. "That's the anti-disco part," Burke says. "To screw people up when they're on the dance floor."

For their third album, *Parallel Lines*, Blondie hooked up with producer Mike Chapman. The band was already big in the U.K., and the pressure was on to get them across in America, where they'd never even charted. Chapman liked "Heart of Glass" but thought it needed a new vibe; as he recalls, "Debbie said, 'Well, maybe it could be like a Donna Summer thing.' Chris was into it, of course—Debbie and Chris were always in sync—but everyone else looked at each other like, 'The girl's lost it.'"

Burke remembers differently: "I've read that I was opposed to using the disco beat," he says, "but *Saturday Night Fever* is one of my favorite records."

In 1978, Chapman and Blondie hunkered down in New York's Record Plant, down the hall from where Bruce Springsteen was beginning to record *Darkness on the Edge of Town*, and spent about a week on "Heart of Glass." The new version featured a brand-new instrument: one of the earliest Roland drum machines, the CompuRhythm CR-78. "It was all done the slow way," Harry remembers. "We had to practically record each beat by hand."

Even so, they didn't have high hopes. Chapman buried "Heart of Glass" in the middle of side two: "I didn't want their fans to hear it too early on the record and think, 'Oh, Jesus, they've become a disco band.'" The suits at Chrysalis Records hated *Parallel Lines*, Chapman says, and didn't think there were any hits on it. It ended up going platinum and becoming one of the cornerstones of new wave, with shiny surfaces draped around the raw force they'd developed in their CBGB days.

"Heart of Glass" was the album's third single, and while the band was on tour in Italy, they learned that it had gone to No. 1 back home. Andy Warhol feted Blondie with a party at the posh disco capital Studio 54—although Stein says the band almost never went there, preferring grubbier downtown spots.

Naturally, the song inspired an immediate backlash: "Our peers labeled us as disco sellouts," Burke remembers. Even Blondie bassist Nigel Harrison infamously called "Heart of Glass" a "compromise with commerciality." "But disco had room for everybody," says Burke. "It was an integrated scene, whereas the punk scene had tunnel vision."

Harry has a different perspective. "'Heart of Glass' wasn't really a disco song," she says. "It had disco elements, and I think that was repulsive to a lot of people. But we always wanted to experiment and try different things."

After splitting up in the early '80s, Blondie reunited in 1998, and they play "Heart of Glass" to this day, although its arrangement is still mutating, Burke says. "We've stripped it down, we've taken the synths out ... on our last tour of England, we were doing a version that kind of sounded like the *Darkness*, believe it or not. But sometimes we go on a European TV program and lip-sync it, and we think, 'Ahhh ... that's how it goes.'" [BLENDER]

VITAL STATISTICS

SONG "Heart of Glass"

ARTIST Blondie

LABEL Chrysalis

PERFORMERS Deborah Harry, vocals, Chris Stein, guitar, Frank Infante, guitar, Nigel Harrison, bass, Jimmy Destri, keyboards, Clem Burke, drums, Mike Chapman, backing vocals

WRITTEN BY: Deborah Harry and Chris Stein

PRODUCER: Mike Chapman

CHART DEBUT: February 1979

HIGHEST CHART POSITION: 1

WHO'S WHO

DEBORAH HARRY

Platinum-maned, icy-cool Blondie frontwoman

CHRIS STEIN

Blondie guitarist, Harry's then-significant other and not-so-secret R&B fanatic

CLEM BURKE

Sticksman for Blondie, part-time disco buff, and session drummer supreme



Left to right: dude, dude, dude, dude, schwing!, dude.



"HEART OF GLASS"

FOR THEIR FIRST NO. 1 HIT, NEW YORK NEW WAVE BLONDIE PISSSED OFF THE PUNK ELITE—AND TRIED TO GET DISCO DANCERS TO STUMBLE

BY DOUGLAS WOLK

Debbie Harry:
"Is there a draft
in here?"

Ask Blender

YOU SEND QUESTIONS, WE GET ANSWERS. WHO LOVES YA, BABY?

WAS AXL ROSE RELATED TO SHANNON HOON OF BLIND MELON? I'VE READ DIFFERENT THINGS.

FREYA FARLUCCI, WICHITA, KS

There's a lot of confusion about this: The Blind Melon singer, who died of a cocaine overdose in 1995, has been variously described as either Rose's brother, half-brother or cousin. Both of them came from Lafayette, Indiana, but they were actually unrelated.

Before leaving to find stardom and strangeness in California, the future Rose, born William Bruce Rose, was friends with Hoon's sister. Hoping to emulate the local hero, Hoon followed the now renamed Axl Rose to Los Angeles in 1989. The two met up, and Rose took him under his protective wing. The budding singer was invited into the studio to add backing vocals on tracks for *Use Your Illusion I* and *Use Your Illusion II*. He even appeared in the video for "Don't Cry." This fortuitous event set his band Blind Melon on their way. Sadly, their short-lived career—involving Hoon's serious coke abuse, endless rehab stints and an arrest for indecent exposure onstage—makes for one of the most resolutely doomed stories in rock.

MY FATHER SAYS THAT WHEN HE WAS A TEENAGER, HE WAS IN THE AUDIENCE AT A WHO CONCERT AND ALMOST GOT TO DRUM FOR THEM AFTER KEITH MOON PASSED OUT ONSTAGE—BUT THEY WOUND UP PICKING SOMEONE ELSE. IS MY FATHER FULL OF SHIT?

GERRY CAMPBELL, MARIN CITY, CA

Far be it from us to cast aspersions on your dad's integrity: This actually did happen. On November 20, 1973, the Who were opening their first U.S. tour in two years at the Cow Palace in San Francisco. Unfortunately, hellraising drummer Keith Moon had taken some PCP and was, naturally enough, having big problems behind the kit. When he eventually passed out—halfway through "Won't Get Fooled Again"—Pete Townshend joked to the audience, "We're going to try and revive our drummer by punching him in the stomach and giving him a custard enema."

Moon was revived, but swiftly lost consciousness again. Rather than ending the show, Townshend asked: "Can anybody play the drums? I mean somebody good!"

The lucky Who fan—sorry, Mr. Campbell—was Scott Halpin, a 19-year-old from Muscatine, Iowa, who stepped up despite not having touched a kit for six months. He carried himself well on "Naked Eye" and a "Smokestack Lightning/Spoonful" blues medley before the band finally retired. "It all happened really quickly. I didn't have time to think about it and get nervous," he said afterwards.

His shining moment is even recorded for posterity on the aptly named bootleg *Our Drummer's Out Cold*.

I KNOW MADONNA HAS WON A COUPLE OF GOLDEN RASPBERRY AWARDS. HAVE ANY OTHER POP STARS RECEIVED THIS DISTINCTION?

H.M. FORTHWRIGHT, TERRE HAUTE, IN



Are you kidding? They're awards for bad movies and bad movie acting: Pop stars own the Razzie Awards! In 2002, the Worst Actress award was tied between Madonna, for the Guy Ritchie–helmed *Swept Away*, and Britney Spears, for *Crossroads*. The

same award has previously gone to the Spice Girls for *Spice World* (1998), Mariah Carey for *Glitter* (2001) and, yes, to Madonna in various filmic atrocities: *Shanghai Surprise* (1986), *Who's That Girl?* (1987), *Body of Evidence* (1993) and *The Next Best Thing* (2000). Worst Actor has gone to Prince for *Under the Cherry Moon* (1986). Winners of the Worst New Star award include Vanilla Ice for *Cool As Ice* (1991) and Janet Jackson for *Poetic Justice* (1993). And we haven't even gotten to Jennifer Lopez yet ...

WHY HAS MICHAEL JACKSON MOVED TO BAHRAIN? WHAT'S THERE?

PETER VITIELLO, BROOKLINE, MA

Not much. This archipelago of more than 30 islands in the Persian Gulf is mainly desert—not even particularly oil-rich desert at that. Despite some claims to being the most democratic Gulf state, it has been run since 1783 by the al Khalifa family. Both Michael and Jermaine Jackson are friends with the king's son, Sheik Abdullah bin Hamad al Khalifa.

The democracy claim is pretty relative: In June, just before Jackson first visited while recuperating from his strenuous child-abuse trial, police reportedly beat peaceful protesters on the streets of capital Manama.



Jackson, just before the desert sun disintegrated him

It's not all bad, though. Alcohol is not illegal in Bahrain, as it is in many Muslim countries, and so the nation has earned the nickname "the bar" from its Saudi neighbors.

IS IT TRUE THAT BEFORE HE WAS FAMOUS, LENNY KRAVITZ TRIED TO MAKE IT AS A PRINCE IMPERSONATOR?

JULES ZHENG, NEW YORK CITY

Kinda. Kravitz's days as Romeo Blue—a lithe young synth-funkster with dyed blue hair and blue contact lenses—owed as much to elegant shapeshifter David Bowie as to Prince. "I was the thin brown duke!" Kravitz later quipped.

Kravitz adopted the name as a late teen on leaving the famous Beverly Hills High School. The future superstar gathered enough funds for a ten-song demo. This led to a record deal that collapsed before anything was released.

As the mysterious Mr. Blue, Lenny met future wife Lisa Bonet (at a New Edition concert, no less). Soon after, he met Henry Hirsch, a recording engineer who helped him put together his debut album, *Let Love Rule*, released on Virgin in 1989. Wisely, by then he had decided to return to a variation on his birth name—Leonard Kravitz—and ditch the whole blue thing. [BLENDER]

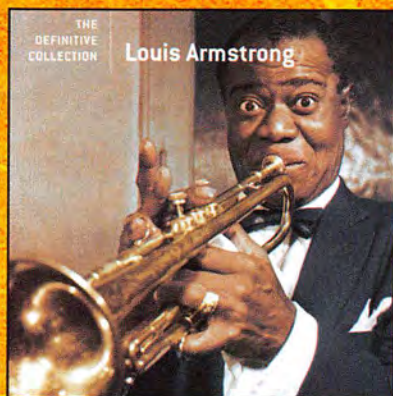
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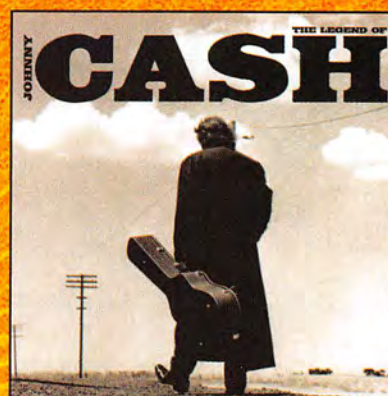
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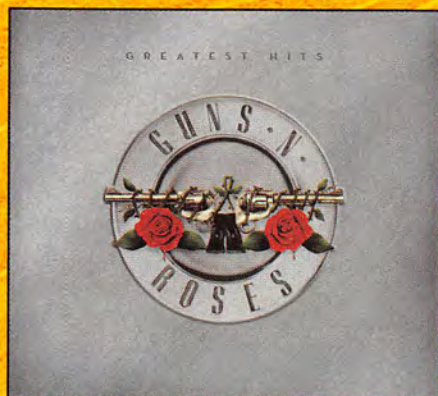
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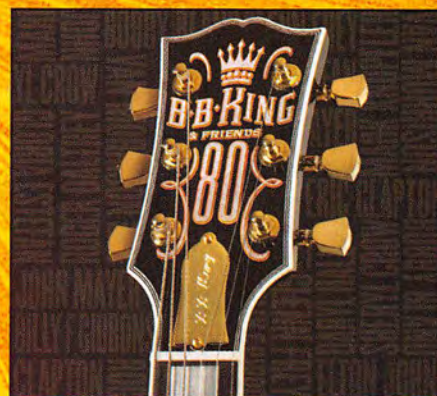
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The Black Eyed Peas,
left to right: will.i.am,
Fergie, Taboo and
apl.de.ap.

WILL.I.AM: BLAZER BY PAUL SMITH
PANTS BY WILLIAM HUNT SHIRT BY
AMERICAN APPAREL SHOES BY
ADIDAS. FERGIE: SHIRT BY MISS SIXTY
SHORTS BY AMERICAN APPAREL
SHOES BY GINA. TABOO: SHIRT, TIE
AND JACKET BY WILLIAM HUNT PANTS
BY EVISU. APL: SHIRT, JACKET AND
PANTS BY TED BAKER SUNGLASSES
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PEAS A CHANCE

→ **GIVE**

THINK IT'S ALL HUMPS AND LUMPS IN THE
LIVES OF HIP-POP'S BIGGEST STARS. THE
BLACK EYED PEAS? ONLY IF YOU IGNORE THE
DRUGS, POVERTY AND DEADBEAT DADS THEY
HAD TO ENDURE IN ORDER TO REACH THE TOP



EVEN DURING

the Christmas-party season, finding somewhere to eat in Glasgow, Scotland, after 11 P.M. is no easy feat. The Black Eyed Peas had a table booked at an upmarket Indian restaurant for 10:30, but they're running late. When will.i.am (William Adams),

hop. But in 2005 they are big in Glasgow—they are big virtually everywhere—and fame is still enough of a novelty for them to find it hilarious. Over a banquet of Indian food, Will jokes about the manager's sudden change of heart. "Hey, buddy! Meet my wife! You wanna sex her? Sex her, please! Where is the love? Right here, brother!"

The following evening, the Black Eyed Peas play the 2,500-seat Carling Academy Glasgow, the latest date in a never-ending tour that began back in 2003 and will finally wind up at worldwide festivals this summer. No PBS producer could assemble a more convincing multicultural cast—a black man, a white girl, a Mexican, a Filipino—and no A&R executive could contrive a sound that hits so many of pop's sweet spots. During their tireless two-hour set, the Peas appropriate a Guns N' Roses riff and Michael Jackson bassline here, a

follow-up, *Monkey Business*, has already passed the 4 million mark.

With ubiquity comes hostility, though. Never beloved by critics, one Slate.com writer recently branded their T&A-meets-TRL single "My Humps" "so bad as to veer toward evil." No televised awards show or corporate event felt complete, it seemed, without the Peas hyperactively bounding around the stage. In October, *Saturday Night Live* spoofed the Best Buy commercial in which the Peas pop up everywhere from a commuter bus to a living room. Recognizing that this scenario increasingly seemed less like a cute metaphor than a very real possibility, *SNL* portrayed the band as shameless commercial whores ("No no no no/Don't phunk with Pfizer," went one venomously hilarious refrain, to the tune of "Don't Phunk With My Heart").

After seeing the sketch, Will immedi-



Apl checks to make sure Fergie's dry. She is.

Live from New York ... it's *Saturday Night Live*'s Peas parody.

apl.de.ap (Allan Pineda) and Taboo (Jaime Gomez) finally arrive, the maitre d' sees only three eccentrically dressed Americans with poor timing (Stacy "Fergie" Ferguson is coming along later). He says that the kitchen is closed.

The grim specter of British fast food looms until the manager walks up and his eyes almost pop through his glasses. "Aren't youse Black Eyed Peas?" he asks in a thick Glaswegian accent. When they answer in the affirmative he asks them to take a seat and bustles off. Five minutes later, the kitchen has miraculously reopened and the pesky late arrivals have become the guests of honor.

Ten years ago, Apl and Taboo tell *Blender*, the band were so poor they would sometimes flee a restaurant without paying. Even four years ago, being a Black Eyed Pea would merit special privileges only in eateries run by aficionados of backpacker hip-

hop from 50 Cent and Kelis there. At one point they even pay their respects to local heroes Franz Ferdinand: "I say Glasgow! You say Glasgow! I say take me out!"

The Black Eyed Peas' cheerful, cartoonish approach, far removed from most hip-hop's realness orthodoxy, has made them the world's favorite good-time rappers, and Will one of the industry's most in-demand songwriters and producers. Cross-over superstars from Kanye West to Diddy sing their praises. Radio programmers and *Fortune* 500 marketing veeps take comfort in their upbeat idealism. Come-together anthem "Where Is the Love?," featuring Justin Timberlake, was a global phenomenon in 2003. The following year, "Let's Get Retarded" (tactfully renamed "Let's Get It Started") burned itself into the brains of couch potatoes as the NBA's playoff theme. Their 2003 album, *Elephunk*, sold more than 7 million copies worldwide. Last year's

ately called up his label, Interscope, to discuss their new image problem.

"I think the problem is people don't know who the fuck we are," he reflects, hinting at the turbulent saga of drugs, alcohol, depression and heartbreak that lies behind their current success. "They don't know what we're about and why we make the music we make, because we're the only group like this."

• • •

WHEN WILLIAM ADAMS was growing up in the projects of East Los Angeles, his mother wouldn't let him play with the other kids. "I'd be like, 'But everyone's playing over there!'" he remembers with a husky chuckle. "She'd be like, 'So what? I don't want you joining in what they playing. You make something up and make them come over and play with you.'"

Like the other men in the Black Eyed

Peas, Will didn't grow up with his father, whom he dismisses as his "sperm donor." His mother raised him to be different: Being regarded as an artistic oddball with an eccentric dress sense gave him a "ghetto free pass" from the gangbangers. His was a multicultural existence from the first grade: He lived in a mostly Mexican neighborhood, attended an all-black church and got bused to a white-dominated school.

Like Lindsay Lohan in *Mean Girls*, he sketches out the racial geography of his school. "The black people hung out by the lunch tables, the Mexicans hung out by the bathroom, the white people hung out to the lockers ... I would always wander between the different sections. If I didn't go to that school, Black Eyed Peas wouldn't be what it is. I don't think we would be able to relate to every country on the planet."

One country they relate to more than most is the Philippines. Until he was 14, Apl lived there with his mom; his absent father was a U.S. serviceman. Via a sponsorship program, an American by the name of Joe Ben Hudgens sent him a dollar a day and invited Apl to the States to see an eye specialist about his nystagmus, a condition that causes involuntary movement of the eyes (it's still not cured, but it's under control). Hudgens ended up formally adopting Apl, and brought him to live in L.A. "Sunset is always the saddest time for me, 'cause that was the time I left," the rapper says.

Hudgens's roommate was Will's uncle, and the two boys became friends, even though at first Apl couldn't speak a word of English. "Will is open-minded. He didn't care how I dressed or what I looked like."

The two teenagers started hanging out at a club called Balistyx, where Will would enter rhyme battles while Apl breakdanced. With another friend, Mookie, they formed a group called Atban Klann. They signed to Eazy-E's Ruthless label while still in high school, but when the N.W.A founder died three years later, so did Atban Klann's prospects, and their debut album was shelved. "We were like, 'Damn, we thought this was going to be easy,'" says Apl.

As Atban Klann mutated into the Black Eyed Peas, Mookie was replaced by Taboo, another figure on the Balistyx scene. Like his new bandmates, he was a misfit, the only Mexican in his barrio to wear an Africa medallion and MC Hammer pants. "They'd say, 'Why are you dancing like a black dude?'" He jiggles in his chair and acts out every anecdote as if he can't stop dancing even while sitting down.

Taboo jokes that his first job in the entertainment industry was as part of the parades at Disneyland. His role was to walk behind the horses shoveling up their manure. "I was picking up shit, but I wasn't

POP THESAUR-ASS

IN HONOR OF FERGIE'S CHART-TOPPING "HUMPS," BLENDER PRESENTS A MUSICAL GLOSSARY OF THE GLUTEUS MAXIMUS

apple bottom (ap-l bū-tom) *n.* Example of usage: "Cuz she was the definition of a ghetto queen/And you should see that apple bottom in jeans."

Nelly "Paradise" 2004

azz (azz) *n.* Example of usage: "Girl, you looks good, won't you back that azz up?/You're a fine motherfucker, won't you back that azz up?"

Juvenile "Back That Azz Up" 1998

badunkadunk (ba-dung-ka-dunk) *n.* Example of usage: "Girl, you gotta badunkadunk/No doubt, badunkadunk, badunkadunk/Break me off a chunk of that badunkadunk."

Keith Murray "Da Ba Dunk Song" 2003

bon-bon (bān-bān) *n.* Example of usage: "Shake it my way, oh shake your bon-bon/Shake your bon-bon, shake your bon-bon."

Ricky Martin "Shake Your Bon-Bon" 1999

bumper (bum-per) *n.* Example of usage: "Pull up to my bumper, baby/In your long black limousine/Pull up to my bumper, baby/And drive it in between."

Grace Jones "Pull Up to the Bumper" 1981

dumps (dumps) *n.* Example of usage: "She had dumps like a truck truck truck."

Sisqó "Thong Song" 1999



laffy taffy (laf-ee taf-ee) *n.* Example of usage: "Ima toss da laffy taffy/Toss it, flip it and slap it/Bust a couple of nuts/And get right back at it."

D4L "Laffy Taffy" 2005

mud flaps (mud-flaps) *n.* Example of usage: "Big bottom, big bottom/Talk about mud flaps, my girl's got 'em!"

Spinal Tap "Big Bottom" 1984

salt shaker (sault sha-ker) *n.* Example of usage: "Shake it like a salt shaker."

Ying Yang Twins "Salt Shaker" 2003

trunk (trung) *n.* Example of usage: "... You make your booty go bump, bump/You got a whole lot of junk in your trunk, trunk."

R. Kelly feat. Elephant Man "Reggae Bump Bump" 2005

tush (toosh) *n.* Example of usage: "I ain't askin' for much/I said, Lord, take me downtown/I'm just lookin' for some tush."

ZZ Top "Tush" 1975

the shit," he says, roaring with laughter.

On their first album, 1998's *Behind the Front*, Black Eyed Peas made A Tribe Called Quest look like Tha Dogg Pound. Resembling not so much rappers as the proprietors of a whole-foods store, they wore long hair, natural fabrics and eyeglasses. Underground hip-hop heads flocked to their socially conscious lyrics and vibrant live shows; most record buyers did not. Their second album, *Bridging the Gap*, featured

"IF WE DIDN'T GET THROUGH THAT EARLY PERIOD, WE WOULD PROBABLY ALL BE HOMELESS ALCOHOLICS." WILL.I.AM

Macy Gray, De La Soul and Mos Def, and sold fewer copies than their debut.

Dejected, the trio took a break to plan their next move. That, says Will, was when the trouble really started. "I remember when I was with my ex-girlfriend, I'd be like, 'Look at that homeless person over there. I wonder what decisions he made to get to that point?' I think if we didn't get through that whole period then we would probably all be homeless, mentally fucked-up alcoholics, with no way out."

WHEN BLENDER ASKS Will to sum up his bandmates, he calls Fergie the body, Taboo the blood, himself the head and Apl the heart. "We connect like Voltron," says Apl, wearing a preppy diamond-patterned sweater and a dazzling, toothy smile.

While the Black Eyed Peas were on →

hiatus, Apl heard some bad news from the Philippines: His younger brother had committed suicide. One of Apl's priorities had been to earn money to send back home, and he felt that he'd failed. "It kinda took away my whole purpose of going to America, y'know?"

At the same time, he split with his girlfriend, which made him even more depressed. He became addicted to crystal methamphetamine, staying up for three days, then sleeping for the next three. He paid for his habit with the \$100,000 he had received from licensing a Black Eyed Peas song to a Dr. Pepper commercial.

So, you're saying Dr. Pepper funded your meth addiction?

"Yeah," he says, grinning.

One spring day in 2002, Will and the Black Eyed Peas' tour manager, Polo Molina, drove to Apl's house and told him they were taking him thrift-store shopping. Instead they drove him to a rehab clinic in Santa Monica. "I was so mad," says Apl. "I can't believe you guys put me here! I'm not ready for this shit!" Now that I look back, it was just out of love."

Apl slipped back into drugs but returned to rehab a few months later and kicked them for good. Meanwhile, Taboo was having his own problems with alcohol. He would go drinking in Hollywood clubs with Will and act like an obnoxious loudmouth. "Even though I was sleeping on my mom's couch, I was trying to make myself look bigger than I was." He'd brag to his friends, "I'm gonna sell millions of records." And they'd go, "OK, little buddy."

Will's problem was different. "I cheated," he says, his voice becoming quiet. "The girl that helped me get here ... I ruined that." His nine-year relationship disintegrated amid infidelity on both sides. "I feel bad about that, still to this day."

Will is tucked into the corner of a Glasgow coffee shop. He's a generous, thoughtful conversationalist with a gift for mimicry. Impersonating his bandmates' voices, he reenacts a typical argument from the Black Eyed Peas' dark days. "Dude, you got fucking speed problems. And you need to stop drinking, dude." And they said, "Well fuck you! You think you know everything, but that don't make you better than anybody. You make fucking bad decisions too. You're just too fucking scared to do drugs." He shrugs. "That hit home."

One song would turn the Black Eyed Peas' lives around. In August 2001 the death of R&B singer Aaliyah in a plane crash prompted Will to reflect on what he had. He started on a song called "Give Thanks," which would inspire him to write "Where Is the Love?" Then came 9/11.

Until then, he had been writing his usual elaborate wordplay. "Yo my lyrical

skills crack you in the grills, you're fucking with a nigga named Wills for reals," he demonstrates. "Then 9/11 came, and who gives a fuck about my grills and skills? We got to strike people's emotions, we got to hit them right here." He thumps his fist against his chest.

That November, he called a band meeting at their studio in Burbank. They knew that rappers' career lifespans were short, and that their next album could be their last. "That was the most important month of our entire lives."

So the Peas attacked *Elephunk* with fresh purpose. One day, they needed a female vocalist to duet on "Shut Up," and a mutual friend hooked them up with an old acquaintance from the clubs: Stacy Ferguson. The first day she showed up at the studio, she could tell Apl was on meth. She recognized the symptoms all too well.

• • •

FERGIE HAS HOME videos of herself, aged 6, grabbing cereal boxes from the cupboard and acting out commercials. The daughter of Catholic schoolteachers, she was so hyperactive that doctors wanted to put her on Ritalin until her mom vetoed

came long after she'd left home. Wild Orchid, the all-girl R&B trio she formed when she was 20, were being pushed by their label in a teen-pop direction she hated. The harder they pushed, the more she drifted into the underground club scene. After a bad breakup, she plunged into a crystal meth habit. "Once you get into the drug world, you don't realize how far you're getting until you're that far gone."

She stopped eating and pretended to be bulimic to explain away her weight loss, even attending self-help groups to keep up the pretense. She blew all of her savings. She began hearing voices and looking for wiretaps. One day someone offered her a muffin and she realized he thought she was homeless. Rock bottom came in 2001, when she took refuge in a Korean church on Wilshire Boulevard, convinced the FBI were after her.

After that, she says, a higher power intervened. "I, uh, I had a conversation with God, basically. I don't know how to interpret this, but he said, 'I've given you this beautiful gift and you're throwing it away.'" So Fergie moved back to her mom's, began taking hypnotherapy sessions and went off the drugs cold turkey.



Fergie makes like Celine Dion in this summer's *Poseidon*.

the idea. Through dance school, she found an agent and voiceover work, providing the voices for Lucy and Sally in Peanuts cartoons. From 1984 to 1989, she spent summers performing chart hits on the TV show *Kids, Incorporated*. All that time she was a straight-A student, building up her own college fund. She was even a spelling bee champion. "I've lost a lot of brain cells since then," she says, and laughs with a bitter, mirthless edge.

In her teens, Fergie dabbled with members of the Mexican gangs in L.A.'s Hacienda Heights, but her real troubles

Fergie decided to leave Wild Orchid after their last round of commitments. One of them was a radio show in Minneapolis that also featured the Black Eyed Peas, whom she had long admired. In the corridor afterwards she struck up a friendship with Will.

Even when she sang on "Shut Up," however, nobody put two and two together. Will helped her make a solo album and shopped her around to the likes of Puff Daddy and Pharrell Williams. The band's old backing singer, Kim Hill, had left, so Fergie provided vocals wherever they were

needed. Eventually Interscope Records CEO Jimmy Iovine stepped in and suggested that Fergie become a full-time member. "They always had a girl singing the hooks," says Iovine. "I just said, 'Why don't you lock this down?'"

While all this was going on, the Black Eyed Peas were finessing "Where Is the Love?" "I never thought that song was going to be played on the radio," Will insists, rather implausibly. "If I did, I probably wouldn't have written that line calling the CIA terrorists."

With its chorus from Justin Timberlake, an ex-boyfriend of Fergie's, "Where Is the Love?" made the Black Eyed Peas famous in a single stroke. Will says he always planned to be big—he points to lines on the Peas' first album: "Underground niggas don't be thinkin'/About going continental like Lincoln"—but to the fans who filed their Peas albums alongside Common and Dilated Peoples, this was the biggest betrayal since LL Cool J released "I Need Love." "Rappers rapped about those kind of [sellout] groups," Will admits with a throaty laugh. "I used to rap about those kind of groups. I understand."

Taboo is more bullish. "I don't wanna

"I'M NOT ALLOWED TO READ TABLOIDS ANYMORE. THEY'RE BAD FOR MY MENTAL HEALTH." **FERGIE**

appreciate why that makes the self-described "new kid" uncomfortable. As if the tabloids didn't get enough mileage from her colorful past and her relationship with actor Josh Duhamel, the knives came out when she lost control of her bladder during a 2005 show in San Diego. It's an incident she refuses to discuss. "Would you?" she asks, sinking into her chair.

In Europe, says Will, fans shout "Fergie! Fergie!" When they played in the Philippines, the country's president sat in the front row and hundreds of proud Filipinos roared "Apl! Apl!"

Where do they shout "Will! Will!"?

Adams taps his head. "That's not what I'm interested in. Not right now."

In fact, the whole industry seems to be shouting his name. Nominated for a Song of the Year Grammy for co-writing John

song, to be ... whimsical," says John Legend. Will finds songwriting easy; in the hotel prior to our interview he wrote one for Shakira. He came up with the idea for "My Humps" one lunchtime while waiting for a burrito behind a woman with "the biggest butt I've ever seen in my life." He wrote the song that day.

"My Humps," however, is far from typical. Will has an articulate theory on everything from Kanye West's infamous telethon outburst ("I'm sure George Bush does love black people with a fuck of a lot of money") to why Luke Skywalker might be a terrorist ("How many people died just because one dude said, 'Hey I'm gonna run my plane into the Death Star!?'"). Some day he plans to make a solo album, but "I wouldn't sell records because of the things I would want to talk about. You know when you have a book and you say, 'Yo, you need to read this book.' *The Celestine Prophecy, Conversations With God, The Da Vinci Code*. My solo record is gonna feel like that."

Meanwhile, Fergie intends to finish her solo album, Apl plans to make a record in Tagalog and English, and Taboo wants to record a Spanish album, "because my Latin community deserves it." But individually



Fergie (right) in her pre-BEP band, Wild Orchid.



will.i.am with fellow hitmakers Kanye West and Pharrell Williams, 2004.

be living at home with my mom and freestyling in the backyard 'cause I wanna be a purist. Forget that shit. I'm selling out? I'm selling out arenas, motherfucker!"

• • •

OVER DINNER AT the Indian restaurant, Fergie asks *Blender* for the latest celebrity gossip. "I'm not allowed to read tabloids anymore," she says. "They're bad for my mental health."

It doesn't take a Ph.D. in Humpology to understand why Fergie gets more press attention than her bandmates, nor to

Legend's "Ordinary People," the confessed workaholic's list of clients includes Carlos Santana, Diddy, Sting and Earth, Wind & Fire. If he can get studio time in Glasgow later tonight, he plans to write a song for Kelly Rowland, a rap for Timberlake and a beat for Snoop.

"I knew Will would be a great producer from the first day I met him," says Jimmy Iovine. "It's what you hear in Dr. Dre's records, or Pharrell's, or Kanye West's—you hear great record-making, records that sound different from everyone else's."

"Will's not afraid to have fun with a

and collectively, they have much bigger plans too: acting, technology, real estate, maybe a chain of hotels. "You keep on reinventing yourself," explains Taboo. "I don't wanna be one of them old rappers that's trying to be in the limelight."

Will thinks the Black Eyed Peas have a mission. "We give people the tools to feel better about their lives when shit's all fucked up and you don't know what you're going to do with your life. I want to continue to do that for people, but at the same time there's a bigger goal. I just don't know what it is yet." [BLENDER]

TEX APPEAL

COUNTRY STARLET **MIRANDA LAMBERT** LOOKS AS IF BUTTER WOULDN'T MELT IN HER MOUTH. SO HOW COME HER BREAKTHROUGH TUNE IS ABOUT SETTING AN EX-BOYFRIEND ON FIRE?

Miranda Lambert sits at a mirror, a hairstylist fluffing her to perfection. When her cellphone chirps, she snatches it up. "Hi!" she twangs, agate eyes fixed on locks twirling on a brush. "Gettin' pretty," she sing-songs. "What 'chu doin'?"

Lambert is "doing glam," as she puts it, in preparation for her performance on the *Late Late Show*—which tapes, naturally, at 4 P.M. Illusions are institutional here at CBS studios in Los Angeles, with its skyline backdrops and applause conductors, but aside from a puff of mousse here and there, you won't find much artifice with Lambert.

"There's nothing contrived about her," music producer Frank Liddell says of country's newest star. "When she sings something, she means it." But this last bit of news is disconcerting, since the song Lambert is about to sing exults in soaking an ex and his new lover in kerosene—"Light 'em up and watch 'em burn/Teach 'em what they need to learn." On the raucous single from the equally imposing, gold-

certified album *Kerosene*, this natural-born killer goes on to sing, "I don't hate the one who left/You can't hate someone who's dead," a snare crashing behind her. "He's out there holding onto someone, I'm holding up my smoking gun." If Lil' Kim has a more gangsta track, *Blender* hasn't heard it.

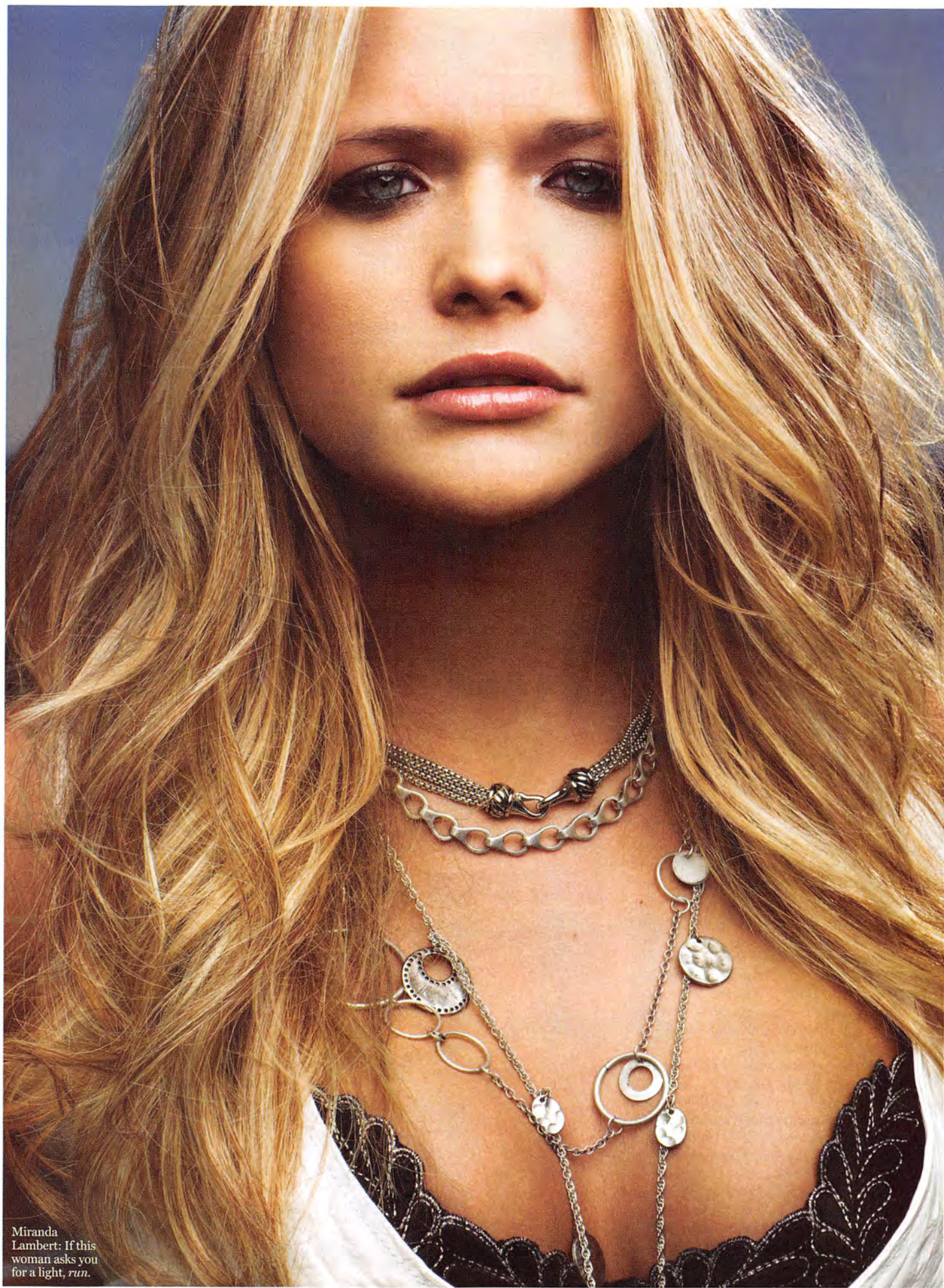
So how to reconcile the Eminem imagery and seasoned songwriting with this sweet-faced 22-year-old now turning around in her chair to sort through cute designer tops?

"I don't like anything too girly, cutesy or ruffly," says the five-foot-four Texan, pushing a turquoise-studded wooden bracelet up her arm. In person, Lambert has a bubblyness and say-anything candor that draw frequent comparisons to Dolly Parton. "Though not the bra size," she adds. "That's different." Picking through a bag of vintage T-shirts and red-neck couture, she holds up a Janis Joplin tee, then checks out another that says WHAT HAPPENS IN THE BARN STAYS IN THE BARN. "For me, [the ideal] is a toss-up between Sheryl Crow and Beyoncé," she says with a laugh. "But Beyoncé—she's my favorite person in the whole world. I'm pretty much a goner for her."

Yes, this does appear to be a genuine Texas girl born well into the '80s. Though raised on Merle Haggard and Waylon Jennings, Lambert got an actual record player only on her 21st birthday. She soon began pilfering vinyl classics from her father's collection. "I think he's got almost every known old record," she marvels, wide-eyed. "All this incredible old stuff ... I mean, he's got *Thriller*!"

The owner of this prized archaeological find sits in a →

BY CHRIS NORRIS ★ PHOTOGRAPHY BY ROBERT MAXWELL



Miranda
Lambert: If this
woman asks you
for a light, *run*.

nearby dressing room, thumbing through the latest issue of *Handgun Hunter*. A leathery-faced 54-year-old with a hard Texas squint, veteran cop Rick Lambert was also struck by his daughter's imposing maturity as a songwriter. "Her songs don't sound like they were written by a 17-year-old," he says. "They sound like they're written by someone that's going on 40, been in rehab, been divorced twice and beaten up a few times. Somebody on the Internet said, 'Oh, Miranda couldn't write those songs, [her father] writes them for her.' But I was like, 'Hey, buddy, she's a better songwriter than I am.' They don't know this girl."



Much of red-state America first met Lambert three years ago as a contestant on *Nashville Star*, a USA cable show easily mischaracterized as country's *American Idol* but actually closer to a televised Grand Ole Opry—that is, a clearinghouse for working singer-songwriters looking to make it big (only with a *Real World*-style shared house). The then-19-year-old Lambert won viewer's hearts as a fresh-faced waif who eventually placed third behind Buddy Jewell and John Arthur Martinez. Like *Idol* ingénue Kelly Clarkson, Lambert went on to a major-label recording contract and debut record. But if Clarkson's well-styled transformation from gameshow sweetheart to mascara-smeared rock chick caught some viewers off-guard, Lambert's debut would have terrified them.

The shock wasn't just in the fiery "Kerosene" but also in the soul, wisdom and astonishingly assured songcraft that runs through all 12 tracks—many of which Lambert wrote at 17. "What About Georgia" scolds a young man trying to flee old wounds by chasing fame; "Bring Me Down" longs for a love that's doomed and destructive; and "Me and Charlie Talking" evokes the magic of a rural childhood. The heartache spilling from songs like the forlorn "Greyhound Bound for Nowhere" raises concern for Lambert's well-being. All this and a raw-boned rock crackle—played by a crew of alt-country journeymen—make *Kerosene* sound like an album that has touched down in every bus stop and divorce court west of Mississippi.

Lambert cites an early education in outlaw country greats: Guy Clark, Jerry Jeff Walker and, most of all, Merle Haggard. "To me, real country music is about real-life stories," she says. "Merle Haggard and Hank Williams, they're talking about 'I got my heart broken and I am not kidding,' and I believe every word they're saying." While she was moved by the stories and learned tricks of the trade from her songwriting father, Lambert also had the benefit of an odd childhood in Lindale, Texas (pop.

MEET THE PARENTS

MIRANDA LAMBERT'S DAD IS NOT THE ONLY MUSIC-STAR 'RENT WHOSE OCCUPATION IS JUST AS CRAZY AS HIS OFFSPRING'S

SUPERMODEL INVENTOR!

JOHN CASABLANCAS

Father of: Strokes frontman Julian Casablancas

Crazy Career: In 1972, Casablancas created the Elite modeling agency, later home to Claudia Schiffer, Cindy Crawford and Naomi Campbell. With a tongue as barbed as the bitchiest of pop divas, Casablancas, who claims to have invented the concept of the "supermodel," has called Campbell a "manipulative, scheming, rude and impossible little madam who has treated us like a dirt," and Heidi Klum a "talentless German sausage."

SECRET AGENT!

MILES COPELAND

Father of: Police drummer Stewart Copeland

Crazy Career: A jazz trumpeter who wrote arrangements for the Glenn Miller band, Copeland's career trajectory took a hard right turn during WWII when he joined the U.S. Army's Counter-Intelligence Corps. He subsequently helped set up the CIA. Officially retired in 1957 but continued "doing jobs that needed doing but the agency wouldn't dare." According to Stewart Copeland, his father, who died in 1991, was "personally responsible for bringing down and setting up half, I think, of the 14 regimes that took over Syria in (a) 10-year period."

DRUG DEALER!

SABRINA JACKSON

Mother of: Curtis "50 Cent" Jackson

Crazy Career: Fiddy's mom died tryin' to get



rich working as a drug dealer on Old South Road in Queens. According to the hip-hop star, "All the people who came around her were either customers or dealers." 50 was just 8 years old when he heard that Sabrina had been murdered. "Someone put something in her drink and turned the gas on," the rapper would later recall. "She was dead for days before they found her."

TENNIS-PLAYING JAZZBO!

TORBEN ULRICH

Father of: Metallica drummer Lars Ulrich

Crazy Career: Ulrich's critical assessment of his son's new material—"I would delete that"—was the funniest thing about Metallica's *Some Kind of Monster* doc not to involve Dave Mustaine crying. But the hirsute Dane was both a professional jazz clarinetist and tennis player when Lars was still a twinkle in his mystically inclined eye. After losing a U.S. Open match when he was distracted by a butterfly, the longtime Buddhist mused, "Was I then a man dreaming I was a butterfly? Or am I now a butterfly dreaming I am a man?" Torben's ZZ Top-esque beard, combined with the fame of his son's band, has earned him the nickname "The Metal Gandalf." CLARK COLLIS



Performing on *Nashville Star*, 2003.

2,500; town motto: "Good country living").

For a time, she and her family survived on subsistence farming and hunting. "I've had her shooting since she was 4," reports Rick Lambert. "And she was mean at a young age with a pistol." She still hunts deer, turkey and wild boar every year with her family—using a rifle for deer and a 20-gauge shotgun for turkey. "I got a turkey last year, but I only had my rifle with me. So after I shot it, there wasn't much left."

But many of her more useful life lessons came from her parents' other job, as private detectives. Founding their agency after Rick Lambert's lengthy police career—which included busting meth rings as an undercover narc—the husband and wife team came to earn the bulk of their income from divorces and child-custody cases. →



(valacyclovir HCl)
500mg, 1g Caplets



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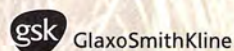
REMEMBER, THERE IS NO CURE FOR HERPES, AND EVEN WITH TREATMENT, IT MAY BE POSSIBLE TO SPREAD HERPES TO OTHERS. VALTREX MAY NOT PREVENT ALL RECURRENCES. TO AVOID A POTENTIALLY SERIOUS COMPLICATION, TELL YOUR DOCTOR IF YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM IS NOT NORMAL BECAUSE OF ADVANCED HIV DISEASE, BONE MARROW OR KIDNEY TRANSPLANT. COMMON SIDE EFFECTS ARE HEADACHE, NAUSEA, AND ABDOMINAL PAIN.

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s	m	r	w	th	f	s
V	A	L	T	R	E	X

INDIVIDUAL RESULTS MAY VARY.

Please see accompanying important patient information.



PATIENT INFORMATION **VALTREX (Val-Trex)** **(valacyclovir hydrochloride) Caplets**

Read the Patient Information that comes with VALTREX before you start using it and each time you get a refill. There may be new information. This information does not take the place of talking to your healthcare provider about your medical condition or treatment. Ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist if you have questions.

What is VALTREX?

VALTREX is a prescription antiviral medicine. VALTREX lowers the ability of herpes viruses to multiply in your body.

VALTREX is used:

- to treat cold sores (also called fever blisters or herpes labialis) in adults
- to treat shingles (also called herpes zoster) in adults
- to treat or control genital herpes outbreaks in adults with normal immune systems
- to control genital herpes outbreaks in adults infected with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) with CD4 cell count greater than 100 cells/mm³
- with safer sex practices to lower the chances of spreading genital herpes to others. Even with safer sex practices, it is still possible to spread genital herpes.

VALTREX used daily with the following safer sex practices can lower the chances of passing genital herpes to your partner.

- **Do not have sexual contact with your partner when you have any symptom or outbreak of genital herpes.**
- **Use a condom** made of latex or polyurethane whenever you have sexual contact.

VALTREX does not cure herpes infections (cold sores, shingles, or genital herpes).

VALTREX has not been studied in children who have not reached puberty.

What are cold sores, shingles, and genital herpes?

Cold sores are caused by a herpes virus that may be spread by kissing or other physical contact with the infected area of the skin. They are small, painful ulcers that you get in or around your mouth. It is not known if VALTREX can stop the spread of cold sores to others.

Shingles is caused by the same herpes virus that causes chicken pox. It causes small, painful blisters that happen on a certain area of your skin. Shingles occurs in people who have already had chicken pox. Shingles can be spread to people who have not had chicken pox or the chickenpox vaccine by contact with the infected areas of the skin. It is not known if VALTREX can stop the spread of shingles to others.

Genital herpes is a sexually transmitted disease. It causes small, painful blisters on your genital area. You can spread genital herpes to others, even when you have no symptoms. If you are sexually active, you can still pass herpes to your partner, even if you are taking VALTREX. VALTREX, taken every day as prescribed and used with the following **safer sex practices**, can lower the chances of passing genital herpes to your partner.

- **Do not have sexual contact with your partner when you have any symptom or outbreak of genital herpes.**
 - **Use a condom** made of latex or polyurethane whenever you have sexual contact.
- Ask your healthcare provider for more information about safer sex practices.

Who should not take VALTREX?

Do not take VALTREX if you are allergic to any of its ingredients or to acyclovir. The active ingredient is valacyclovir. See the end of this leaflet for a complete list of ingredients in VALTREX.

Before taking VALTREX, tell your healthcare provider:
About all your medical conditions, including:

- **if you have had a bone marrow transplant or kidney transplant, or if you have advanced HIV disease or "AIDS":** Patients with these conditions may have a higher chance for getting a blood disorder called thrombotic thrombocytopenic purpura/hemolytic uremic syndrome (TTP/HUS). TTP/HUS can result in death.
- **if you have kidney problems.** Patients with kidney problems may have a higher chance for getting side effects or more kidney problems with VALTREX. Your healthcare provider may give you a lower dose of VALTREX.
- **if you are 65 years of age or older.** Elderly patients have a higher chance of certain side effects. Also, elderly patients are more likely to have kidney problems. Your healthcare provider may give you a lower dose of VALTREX.
- **if you are pregnant or planning to become pregnant.** Talk with your healthcare provider about the risks and benefits of taking prescription drugs (including VALTREX) during pregnancy.
- **if you are breastfeeding.** VALTREX may pass into your milk and it may harm your baby. Talk with your healthcare provider about the best way to feed your baby if you are taking VALTREX.

• **about all the medicines you take,** including prescription and non-prescription medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements. VALTREX may affect other medicines, and other medicines may affect VALTREX. This may happen if you have certain medical conditions such as kidney problems. It is a good idea to keep a complete list of all the medicines you take. Show this list to your healthcare provider and pharmacist any time you get a new medicine.



How should I take VALTREX?

Take VALTREX exactly as prescribed by your healthcare provider. Your dose of VALTREX and length of treatment will depend on the type of herpes infection that you have and any other medical problems that you have.

- Do not stop VALTREX or change your treatment without talking to your healthcare provider.
- VALTREX can be taken with or without food.
- If you are taking VALTREX to treat cold sores, shingles, or genital herpes, you should start treatment as soon as possible after your symptoms start. VALTREX may not help you if you start treatment too late.
- If you miss a dose of VALTREX, take it as soon as you remember and then take your next dose at its regular time. However, if it is almost time for your next dose, **do not take the missed dose.** Wait and take the next dose at the regular time.
- Do not take more than the prescribed number of VALTREX Caplets each day. Call your healthcare provider right away if you take too much VALTREX.

What are the possible side effects of VALTREX?

Kidney failure and nervous system problems are not common, but can be serious in some patients taking VALTREX. Nervous system problems include aggressive behavior, unsteady movement, shaky movements, confusion, speech problems, hallucinations (seeing or hearing things that are really not there), seizures, and coma. Kidney failure and nervous system problems have happened in patients who already have kidney disease and in elderly patients whose kidneys do not work well due to age. **Always tell your healthcare provider if you have kidney problems before taking VALTREX. Call your doctor right away if you get a nervous system problem while you are taking VALTREX.**

Common side effects of VALTREX include headache, nausea, stomach pain, vomiting, and dizziness. Side effects in HIV-infected adults include headache, tiredness, and rash. These side effects are usually mild and usually do not cause patients to stop taking VALTREX.

Other less common side effects include painful periods in women, joint pain, depression, low blood cell counts, and changes in tests that measure how well the liver and kidneys work.

Talk to your healthcare provider if you develop any side effects that concern you.

These are not all the side effects of VALTREX. For more information, ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist.

How should I store VALTREX?

- Store VALTREX at room temperature, 59° to 77°F (15° to 25°C).
- Keep VALTREX in a tightly closed container.
- Do not keep medicine that is out of date or that you no longer need.
- **Keep VALTREX and all medicines out of the reach of children.**

General information about VALTREX

Medicines are sometimes prescribed for conditions that are not mentioned in patient information leaflets. Do not use VALTREX for a condition for which it was not prescribed. Do not give VALTREX to other people, even if they have the same symptoms you have. It may harm them.

This leaflet summarizes the most important information about VALTREX. If you would like more information, talk with your healthcare provider. You can ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist for information about VALTREX that is written for health professionals. More information is available at www.valtrex.com.

What are the ingredients in VALTREX?

Active Ingredient: valacyclovir hydrochloride
Inactive Ingredients: carnauba wax, colloidal silicon dioxide, croscollon, FD&C Blue No. 2 Lake, hypromellose, magnesium stearate, microcrystalline cellulose, polyethylene glycol, polysorbate 80, povidone, and titanium dioxide.
Rx Only

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Research Triangle Park, NC 27709

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GUEST LIST

COMPETITIONS, EVENTS AND OTHER FUN STUFF WE THOUGHT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT

Zippo HOT TOUR AFTER PARTY

On December 2nd, 2005, Zippo and Blender rolled out the red carpet at the OPUS Bar and Grill in Los Angeles to host the Zippo Hot Tour After Party. Over 200 celebrities, entertainment insiders and tastemakers, including Piper Perabo, Wes Ramsey, David Janollari, and members of the All-American Rejects, Easley and The Academy Is enjoyed open bars with endless amounts of Red Bull, hors d'oeuvres, a Zippo branded smoking lounge, deluxe gift bags and tunes spun by DJ Richie Rich.



Zippo Hottie



The Zippo Red Bull Bar



All-American Rejects with Zippo Hotties

Miranda Lambert's secret vice? Ceiling-sniffing.

"We had abused women and their kids living with us," Rick recalls. "And Miranda would hear their stories around the table. It was all laid out there; we didn't shelter her from any of it."

Following a stalled acting career—Lambert was a stand-in on the 2002 teen flick *Slap Her ... She's French*—she began showing a passion for songwriting. Her folks helped her set up gigs around Texas. Then, in 2003, *Nashville Star* put Miranda on the fast track to fame—if not to a supermodel physique. "I mean, the sponsors were McDonald's, Coke and Little Debby," Lambert says, mourning the freshman 15 she put on during filming. "I mean, oh my God. There was no hope!" She has since reduced to a shapely size six, but says, "I'm really a beer girl. I wish I didn't like it so much." She doesn't smoke—the "Kerosene" lines about cigarettes notwithstanding—but tried once, "When I had love troubles. I was

pissed off and I went out and bought a bottle of wine and a pack of cigarettes. I thought I'd try to be a rock star and be depressed."

The relationship that prompted most of the weepers on *Kerosene* ended last summer.

"My wedding day will be second place to meeting Merle Haggard."

mer. Jeff Allen, a fellow East Texas singer-songwriter, has since moved to Nashville. "I still love him, and he's important to me," Lambert says. "But I'm starting to enjoy what I'm doing more, instead of always trying to finagle my way to going home."

Her only bedmates now are two labrador retrievers, Dixie and Molly, and



★ The family that catches perps together, stays together: with mom and dad in June 2005.

she says there are no romantic prospects on the horizon—no Renée Zellweger to her Kenny Chesney, or Nicole Kidman to her Keith Urban. "Well, I went on tour with him," she says of the hunky Urban. "So I had a crush on him like every other female in the world. And I mean, if Johnny Depp asked me out I'd probably go. And when I met Shooter Jennings, I gurbed him a little bit."

Gurbed?

"It's a term for being a real super fan—like maybe a bit too much? I met Shooter in Nashville and I came on a bit strong. But I mean, he's Waylon's son!"

Somewhere between her girl crush on Beyoncé and her more enduring love for Merle Haggard, Lambert seems to have found some kind of sweet spot for new and real country. "I can understand why someone who likes rock & roll likes [the song 'Kerosene']," says producer Frank Liddell, who happens to be married to country star Lee Ann Womack. "But I think it's more country than 99% of what you hear on the radio. It's raw country, what it used to mean. Merle Haggard heard Miranda's record and loved it."

This would seem to be the ultimate achievement for Lambert, but actually meeting her idol—during a tour last year—was more terrifying than gratifying.

"I was so scared, like, what if he was in a bad mood? I'd be crushed forever. But he knocked on my bus door. I mean, *Merle Haggard is knocking on my bus door!* I was freaking out, oh my God, and the bus was a mess, so I went outside and I just talked nonstop, gushing, telling him everything I wanted to say."

You gurbed him.

"I absolutely did. But I was living on a cloud that day. I've never been that high. My wedding day will be second place to meeting Merle Haggard."

What did he say?

"He didn't say anything!" she says, blue eyes opened wide. "'Cause I wouldn't shut up!" [BLUNDER]

SPEND OUR CASH

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THE ARTIST
YELLOWCARD

THE MISSION
TO SPEND \$848 IN ONE DAY ANY
WAY THEY WANT

THE REASON
BLENDER ASKED THEM TO

"LET'S GET PHYSICAL!"

CAN BLENDER'S CASH—AND THE INCREDIBLE HULK—TRANSFORM
YELLOWCARD FROM BOOZE-HAPPY MODERN-ROCK WASTRELS TO
LEAN, MEAN WHEATGRASS-EATING MACHINES?

BY CLARK COLLIS
PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHRIS MCPHERSON



Yellowcard, left to right:
Ryan Mendez, Pete Mosely,
Ryan Key, Sean Mackin,
Longineu Parsons III.
Photographed at Gold's
Gym, Venice, California.

LEFT TO RIGHT: 1. JACKET BY AMERICAN VINTAGE T-SHIRT BY URBAN OUTFITTERS PANTS BY ADIDAS SHOES BY NIKE. 2. JACKET BY AMERICAN VINTAGE T-SHIRT BY AMERICAN APPAREL PANTS BY AMERICAN APPAREL SHOES BY NIKE. 3. JACKET BY AMERICAN VINTAGE T-SHIRT BY URBAN OUTFITTERS PANTS BY AMERICAN VINTAGE SHOES BY ADIDAS SWEATBANDS BY NIKE. 4. PANTS BY NIKE SHOES BY NIKE. 5. T-SHIRT BY AMERICAN APPAREL SWEATSHIRT BY AMERICAN VINTAGE JACKET BY AMERICAN APPAREL PANTS BY AMERICAN VINTAGE SHOES BY SAUCONY SWEATBANDS BY NIKE.

➤ **"I USED TO RUN** a couple of miles every day" says Yellowcard bassist Pete Mosely, standing by the reception area of Gold's Gym in California's Venice Beach. "But these days my fitness regime basically consists of Corona curls."

It is the damage caused by such alcoholic excess that the pop-punk quintet are hoping to reverse. The Floridians, who earned platinum success with their 2003 major-label debut, *Ocean Avenue*, have just released their follow-up, *Lights and Sounds*, and will spend the rest of the year on the road. To prepare for that, they want to be in tippety-top shape. So Mosely & co. have decided to spend *Blender's* \$848 on a day of health-enhancing activities, starting with a workout session at the sweat palace made famous by Arnold Schwarzenegger and former TV Incredible Hulk Lou Ferrigno.

"The people working out here must be thinking, 'Who are these puny humans?'" chuckles recently recruited guitarist Ryan Mendez. He surveys the massed ranks of exercisers before shouting in his best Ahnold-accent, "'Dat's vot ve looked like before ve started vorking out!'"

"This is gonna be a lot of fun," says drummer Longineu Parsons III, a onetime percussive prodigy who was playing shows with his jazz-musician father at the age of 5. "Let's get physical!"

The person with the responsibility for making them do just that is fitness trainer Mari Asp, a Scandinavian and, despite lacking the berserk football-stuffed-in-a-stocking musculature of many exercisers present today, a world bench-press champion.

"I'm guessing you guys don't work out a lot," she says, suspiciously eyeing the Yellowcard party, some of whom are clutching drink containers emblazoned with the Taco Bell logo.

"What are you saying?" demands violinist Sean Mackin, clearly affronted by the implication that the band are what the Governorator would describe as "girlie men."

"I think I probably bench-press 120," adds Parsons with a note of pride.

"I can bench three times that," replies Asp, prior to leading the band through some basic free-weight exercises that leave Yellowcard's twentysomethings severely out of wind. At least frontman Ryan Key has an excuse: Earlier this morning he had his sinuses drained ("I basically had a face colonic") and has been diagnosed with a node on his vocal cords.

"Because of the antibiotics, I'm going to be sober on New Year's Eve," he moans.

Despite this bad news, the amiable lead singer seems to be taking matters with undivine calm, and even gamely agrees to allow Asp to lift him over her head. However, any thought that the rest of Yellowcard will be joining Key in sobriety disappear



Muscling in: applying flower essence (left); with Lou Ferrigno (center); and trainer Mari Asp (right).

when the rest of the band order out for beer and then openly drink said booze even as Asp is instructing them on the finer points of exercise and diet.

The truth is that, like so many of us, Yellowcard's desire to be fit seems to be severely outweighed by their unwillingness to really do anything about it. Only when the Hulk himself, Lou Ferrigno, walks over from his barbells to grunt hello to the band do they renew their efforts, inspired by the 53-year-old's still-impressive physique. Mosely, though, still seems more interested in lifting beer cans than weights.

"Well, we do get a lot of exercise playing every night," he protests. "And, sure, then it's usually four to six hours of drinking. But that's how you're supposed to do it, right? Cardiovascular first—then the carbs!"

Finally, after one last piece of advice from Asp ("Stay off the beer. Especially when you're working out"), we drive over to Santa Monica for lunch at a restaurant called Raw, which exclusively serves uncooked food and not, to Parsons's chagrin, buffalo wings. In fact, as the band are served a variety of salads, healthy soups and a "bacon cheeseburger" made from walnuts and portobello mushrooms, the drummer seems on the brink of outright revolt.

After Parsons asks for the umpteenth time if it is not possible to get something a little more, well, cooked, Key advises, "Just take it as it comes."

"Dude, that's what they say in jail," retorts Parsons, brandishing his heaping forkful of seaweed and shaved zucchini.

Diplomatically changing the subject, *Blender* asks Key about *Lights and Sounds*, in which the band cover bleaker subject matter than before, as typified by "Two Weeks From Twenty," about a U.S. soldier who dies in Iraq just short of graduating from teenagerdom.

"It's definitely a darker look at the state of the world," agrees the singer. "There's no punk rock, fuck-the-government anthem, but we're not very big fans of the current administration."

With "cheeseburgers" digested and politics chewed over, we head back over to Venice where, at a shop called Good Vibrations, we meet Christine von Liederbach, a "flower essence consultant" who has mixed up a special spray-on fragrance for the band that will, she claims, "enhance energies."

"We've been using the Jack Daniels essence, if you know what I mean," cracks Parsons.

Such sarcastic comments aside, the band seem genuinely taken with von Liederbach and even spontaneously hug each other in an attempt to show her that the flower essence has had an effect before they depart. Indeed, while the day has had its ups and down, Yellowcard declare it to

have been a success. Well, sort of.

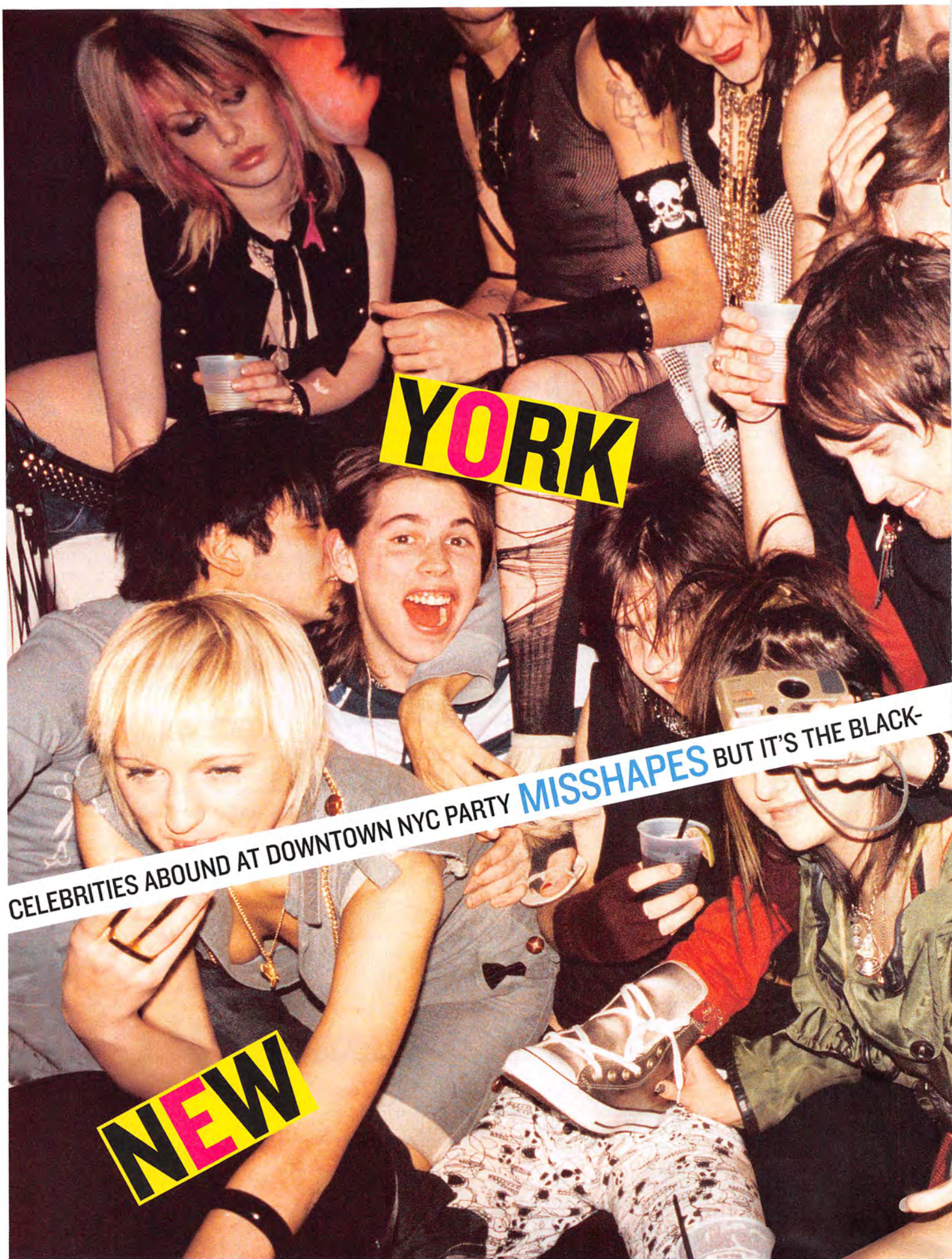
"My body is definitely, like, 'What are you doing to me?'" declares Mosely.

"Meeting the Hulk was pretty rad," says Key. "But I was careful not to clear my plate at the restaurant."

And why was that?

"So that I'd have room for a nice juicy steak," he smiles. [BLENDER]

HOW THEY SPENT IT	
YELLOWCARD	
VENICE BEACH, CALIFORNIA DECEMBER 2, 2005	
TRAINING SESSION	\$200
BEER	\$22
LUNCH	\$426
FLOWER ESSENCE CONSULTATION	\$200
TOTAL	\$848



YORK

CELEBRITIES ABOUND AT DOWNTOWN NYC PARTY **MISSHAPES** BUT IT'S THE BLACK-

NEW

BANGED HIPSTER REGULARS EVERYONE WANTS TO SEE → PHOTOGRAPHY BY JASON NOCITO

DOLLS



➤ IT'S NEARING MIDNIGHT on a cold Manhattan street corner, and scores of people are lined up against Don Hill's, a dark brick building with gated windows. All eyes point forward, fixed firmly on the man with the clipboard. "If you're not on the list and you've never been here before," he intones with bored imperiousness, "you're not getting in."

Inside, it's a sea of black bangs, eyeliner and sleeveless T-shirts. All the girls look like Joan Jett and all the boys look like Joan Jett's sister. On the packed dance floor—where Jessica Alba is shimmying with a small entourage—the new Strokes single blares at high volume before giving way to the Black Eyed Peas' "Don't Phunk With My Heart." The distinctly hip crowd, faced with this distinctly un-hip selection, goes wild.

Welcome to MisShapes, the country's hottest dance-rock party. In a city where hipster clubs become passé faster than a Vicodin bullet to the stomach, MisShapes is going strong after three years. Founded by friends Greg K., 25, Leigh Lezark, 21, and Gordon Nicol, 21, the weekly Saturday soirée has won a coterie of celebrity devotees ("We're like Kabbalah," Nicol says) that spans the worlds of fashion, music and film, from Dior Homme designer Hedi Slimane and Britpop icon Jarvis Cocker (Pulp's "Misshapes" serves as muse) to the Killers, My Chemical Romance, director John Cameron Mitchell, Hilary Duff and a cer-

tain former club kid named Madonna—all of whom have guest-DJ'd.

"When Madonna came," Nicol remembers, "the crowd parted like the sea to let her in. I was temporarily deaf and blind from the screams and the camera flashes. She also has the most amazing skin I've ever felt in my life."

Card-carrying celebrities abound, but the camera-ready club kids are the real draw. Their practiced poses are captured by the house photographer and promptly land on MisShapes.com for all to see. "We've created a stable of MisShapes superstars," says Greg K. "Everyone here thinks they're a celebrity, and in their own way, they are." Lezark, a part-time model, says the site has become an international tastemaker: "We get e-mails from all over the world, asking who people on the site are and where they get their clothes." Nicol agrees: "It's become a bible for what New York kids are wearing."

It's not surprising then, that MisShapes is expanding its reach and brand. This summer, the three entrepreneurs will release a CD that compiles remixes of their favorite party songs alongside a slew of local bands. Kelly Osbourne, for one, believes they have a bright future. "I don't think they get the credibility and time they deserve," she said. "They are going to be huge!"

VICTORIA DE SILVERIO AND JONAH WEINER

MisShapes founders (from left) Gordon Nicol, Leigh Lezark and Greg K.

ABOVE

➔ FROM LEFT // T-SHIRT AND NECKLACE BY DIOR HOMME PANTS AND SUSPENDERS FROM TRASH AND VAUDEVILLE // DRESS, BRA AND TOP BY OBESITY AND SPEED // PANTS BY DIOR HOMME

OPPOSITE, TOP

➔ FROM LEFT // SHIRT FROM OPENING CEREMONY // RINGS BY SURFACE TO AIR

OPPOSITE, BOTTOM

➔ FROM LEFT // JUMPER AND JEWELRY BY SURFACE TO AIR // JUMPER BY JUDI ROSEN JEWELRY BY SURFACE TO AIR // TOP BY BRIAN LICHTENBERG

STYLING BY JOSH MADDEN, ANNIE LADINO AND LYZ OLKO. HAIR BY DENNIS GOTSOULOS AT DE FACTO FOR REDKEN. MAKEUP BY WILLIAM MURPHY USING CHANEL AND KRISTIN GALLEGOS USING ARMANI COSMETICS.







OPPOSITE, TOP

→ STARTING WITH SECOND FROM LEFT
// JACKET BY DIOR HOMME SHIRT BY
AGNÈS B. SCARF BY ALEXANDER MCQUEEN
// JUMPER BY JUDI ROSEN JEWELRY BY
SURFACE TO AIR // TOP AND TIGHTS BY
AMERICAN APPAREL SHORTS BY ROCK &
REPUBLIC // ALL FROM BY TRASH AND
VAUDEVILLE

OPPOSITE, BOTTOM

→ FROM LEFT // DRESS BY STELLA
MCCARTNEY JEWELRY BY SUBVERSIVE
JEWELRY SHOES BY HELMUT LANG //
DRESS BY ZALDY JEWELRY AND SHOES BY
VIVIENNE WESTWOOD // TOP BY OBESITY
AND SPEED PANTS BY MARC JACOBS
SHOES BY DIOR HOMME // SHIRT BY MARC
JACOBS PANTS BY LEVI'S

THIS PAGE, TOP

→ FROM LEFT // JACKET BY DSQUARED2
// DRESS FROM OPENING CEREMONY

THIS PAGE, BOTTOM

→ FROM LEFT // JUMPER BY SURFACE TO
AIR SHOES BY MIU MIU // SHIRT BY
MOMIMOMI BELT BY LOUIS VUITTON
JEANS BY DIESEL SHOES BY NIKE



JEANS BY **ACNE JEANS**, \$295
BELT BY **ACNE JEANS**, \$199
TANK BY **LOS ANGELES DENIM ATELIER**, \$55

JEANS BY **LOS ANGELES DENIM ATELIER**, \$198
T-SHIRT BY **RITTENHOUSE**, \$60

JEANS BY **QUIKSILVER**, \$69.50
BELT BY **QUIKSILVER**, \$33
T-SHIRT BY **POLO JEANS CO. RALPH LAUREN**, \$29.50
VEST BY **ACNE JEANS**, \$249

THE SIMPLE LIFE

TWELVE SUBTLY DIFFERENT WAYS
TO PUT TOGETHER THE ROCK
UNIFORM THAT GOES ANYWHERE:
JEANS AND SNEAKERS

PHOTOGRAPHY BY PAOLA KUDACKI
STYLING BY ANDA & MASHA FOR THE WALL GROUP

SNEAKERS BY **NIKE** | \$90

SNEAKERS BY **CONVERSE** | \$60

SNEAKERS BY **ORIGINAL PENGUIN** | \$85

JEANS BY **DKNY JEANS**, \$89.50
BELT BY **QUIKSILVER**, \$27
T-SHIRT BY **M. CARTER**, \$55
VEST BY **ES**, \$50

JEANS BY **EVISU**, \$595
SHIRT BY **EVIL GENIUS**, \$45

JEANS BY **EMERICA**, \$62
SWEATSHIRT BY **EMERICA**, \$58



SNEAKERS BY **JORDAN** | \$100

SNEAKERS BY **PUMA** | \$345

SNEAKERS BY **NIKE** | \$80

JEANS BY NAUTICA, \$69.50
BELT BY QUIKSILVER, \$33
T-SHIRT BY POLO JEANS CO.
RALPH LAUREN, \$34.50
SWEATSHIRT BY POLO JEANS CO.
RALPH LAUREN, \$89.50

JEANS BY POLO JEANS CO.
RALPH LAUREN, \$79
T-SHIRT BY LOS ANGELES DENIM
ATELIER, \$55
SHIRT BY WRANGLER47, \$82

JEANS BY CLIFT, \$182
LEATHER CHAIN BY ARMANI
EXCHANGE, \$28
T-SHIRT BY HUGO BOSS, \$55



SNEAKERS BY NIKE | \$55

SNEAKERS BY FRED PERRY | \$120

SNEAKERS BY VANS BY LOOMSTATE | \$90

JEANS BY **ARMANI EXCHANGE**, \$98
JACKET BY **ARMANI EXCHANGE**, \$160

JEANS BY **WRANGLER PREMIUM PATCH**,
\$87
CHECKED SHIRT BY **BEN SHERMAN**, \$79
BROWN SHIRT BY **WRANGLER47**, \$108

JEANS BY **LEVI'S RED**, \$68
BELT BY **GAP**, \$29.50
SHIRT BY **BEN SHERMAN**, \$79



SNEAKERS BY **NIKE** | \$65

SNEAKERS BY **REEBOK** | \$60

SNEAKERS BY **ADIDAS** | \$65



bold taste

clean finish




Budweiser
SELECT

**115****THE VERONICAS**

"And twiiins!" Australia's pop-punk answer to Mary-Kate and Ashley have come to rock you.

★★★

**118****EMINEM**

Fatherhood and fart jokes: A new hits set shows the two sides of the wildly complex rapper named Marshall.

★★★

**126****FIONA APPLE**

The human nerve-ending hits the road with a bunch of new songs "The Man" didn't want you to hear!

★★★

THE GUIDE

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MARY J. BLIGE

BEYONCÉ WHO? MARIAH WHA? THE FIRST QUEEN OF HIP-HOP SOUL ROARS BACK

Jenny Lewis
greeted visitor
Yao Ming.

ORANGE CRUSH

RILO KILEY DEMI-STAR EXPLORES LOVE, FAMILY, SUPERGROUPS

JENNY LEWIS

RABBIT FUR COAT ★★★★★

TEAM LOVE

WHAT KIND OF sex symbol is Jenny Lewis? Crimson tresses, sumptuous curves and a child-star past—she jogged a generation's libido by popping annoying baby brother Ben's kissing cherry on *Growing Pains*—stimulate the fanboy lust Lewis earns as singer for the surging L.A. indie-pop band Rilo Kiley. Men who would be ashamed of even glancing at Pamela Anderson fawn over Lewis; a lesser talent would be buried by the gallons of slobber. But it isn't her looks that have made Lewis the favorite duet partner for sensitive boys like Ben Gibbard of Death Cab for Cutie and Ben Lee, or the envy of songwriters from Conor Oberst to Elvis Costello. This solo project, released by Oberst's label in the pause before Rilo Kiley's mainstream breakthrough, explores how Lewis's favorite body part—her brain—fits in with and fights the rest of her.

Lewis has called these songs a tribute to

her mom, a former lounge singer who supported her kids waiting tables and collecting welfare after the family split up. Her daughter learned young that one man's dream is another's divorcee; in her songs, Lewis lovingly dissects the dreams men make of women and the ones they allow themselves. She is to indie rock what Ally McBeal (or

this season, Meredith Grey) is to evening-cereal TV: the thinking lover's wistful, exhausted, whip-smart champion, a struggling survivor of the sexual revolution's melancholy collapse.

Marked by a longing for God and an intact family unit, *Rabbit Fur Coat* wonders what "real" or "love" could possibly mean in a world of promiscuity, agnosticism and designer knockoffs. "I was born secular and inconsolable," Lewis sings, her voice lustrous as a dime-store diamond, as the avant-gospel duo the Watson Twins testify behind her. The first single, "Rise Up With Fists," epitomizes Lewis's unchurched gospel sound, its vocal crescendos and meaty guitar licks countered by droll lyrics surveying a world's worth of bad decisions. A Traveling Wilburys cover featuring Gibbard, Oberst and home-studio whiz M. Ward is Lewis's offhanded self-locator: Reveling in the twilight of the Dylan/Orbison/Harrison/Petty rock gods who made the '80s original, she focuses on the way glory fades.

Lewis's sense of history reflects her smarts. Unlike the "alt-country" types she's often lumped with, she knows there's nothing down-home about a silver-screen Valley girl channeling Dusty Springfield. The Motown, country-rock and white-girl gospel that Lewis found in her mom's record collection schooled her in secondhand sincerity, and that's the tradition she honors here. Produced by Ward and Omaha's own Phil Spector, Mike Mogis, the record has the relationship to "genuine" roots music that its titular ratty heirloom implies—it's a perfect fake, dyed to match the sensibility of a skeptic who won't give up

"I'm in love with illusions, so saw me in half," she croons. But what Lewis really loves is taking the magician's box apart until she finds what makes her feel as though she's being torn up. It's a painful process. Lewis can't stop rising to the challenge.

ANN POWERS

DOWNLOAD: "Happy," "The Charging Sky"

TALES FROM THE STUDIO

JENNY LEWIS SPILLS THE DIRT ON THE MAKING OF *RABBIT FUR COAT*

WHERE THE MAGIC HAPPENED
Rotund Rascal, a studio in the San Fernando Valley that no longer exists, then four days in Portland with M. Ward.

ALBUM THAT PROVIDED INSPIRATION
Gonna Take a Miracle by Laura Nyro and LaBelle, from 1971—I grew up listening to that, and it's sort of responsible for my making this album.

THINGS I COULDN'T LIVE WITHOUT IN THE STUDIO
Beer. And I quit smoking the day after finishing the record—trying to quit during would've been a bad idea.

LOVED ONES WHO PASSED AWAY DURING THE MAKING OF THIS RECORD
I lost a plant—my friend Morgan overwatered it. That's such a sad question.

THE MONEY THAT WAS SPENT RECORDING THIS ALBUM COULD BUY

A used '80s Volvo. A shitty one.

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW BEFORE YOU BUY THIS RECORD
My mom's fur coat in the song "Rabbit Fur Coat" is a metaphor. So if anyone throws red paint on my mother, there's gonna be a problem. STEVE KANDELL

THE SCORE



A CLASSIC



GREAT



GOOD



MEDIOCRE



FOUL

ARAB STRAP

THE LAST ROMANCE ★★

TRANSDREAMER

Boozy Scots finally glimpse the light at the end of the hangover

Sad-sack mumbler Aidan Moffat and lo-fi multi-instrumentalist Malcolm Middleton specialize in rambling dirges that report in gruesome detail on desperate nights out and ugly mornings after. True to form, their sixth album of sordid, last-call balladry opens with a plea to "burn these sheets that we've just fucked in," but they've also picked up the tempo, sweetened the tunes and upgraded the rhythm section (formerly just the cheapest of drum machines). Amid the customary self-loathing and bad sex, there are even glimmers of romantic contentment: "Speed-Date" urgently makes a case for monogamy, of all things, and on the shockingly euphoric "There Is No Ending," Moffat runs through a list of his less adorable qualities ("growing gut," "rotten teeth") and defiantly declares himself ready to be loved.

DENNIS LIM

DOWNLOAD: "There Is No Ending," "Stink," "Speed-Date"

BABYSHAMBLES

DOWN IN ALBION ★★ 1/2

ROUGH TRADE

No. 1 suspect on rock's next-to-die list finds life (of sorts) after the Libertines

It's encouraging that Pete Doherty has found time to make a record in his busy schedule of smoking crack, dating Kate Moss and waging unfathomable feuds, but in art, as in life, he needs someone to tell him "no." Without former Libertines co-leader Carl Barât to rein him in, Doherty's free to follow every disastrous whim—even the strongest songs on his new band's debut are hobbled by sickly vocals and Mick Jones's pallid, needle-thin production. The fact that *Down in Albion* contains the bones of something remarkable—the Kinks-inspired "Albion" is a devastatingly poignant portrait of England—makes it even sadder. Doherty hasn't learned that it's possible to write about the

romance of doomed youth without embodying dissolution.

DORIAN LYNKEY

DOWNLOAD: "Albion," "A'rebours"

BAD WIZARD

SKY HIGH ★★ 1/2

HOWLER

THE SWORD

THE SWORD ★★ 1/2

KEMADO

These two groups of nostalgic metal geeks drop their hammers of the gods

The five members of Bad Wizard live in New York City, but judging by their scrupulously shit-kicking boogie-rock, they fantasize about life below the Mason-Dixon line. Their blustery fourth album blends furious licks, muffled, aggro vocals and listless sentiments like "Stay away from the jealous man" into an undifferentiated murk. Only hypnotically walloping standout "Agent" reflects the city's anxious edge. The Sword, from Austin, Texas, adopt an equally timeless (or deathless) sound on their first album: doom metal. Doom fans will find the sludgy, abrasive guitars and wailed vocals familiar as church bells. (Fantasy fans will note lyrics concerning horned goddesses.) But the band has a distinct way with wild-eyed melodies, and their tempos hum rather than crawl. They've even got a sense of humor: On "Winter's Wolves," they furnish the howls themselves.

NICK CATUCCI

DOWNLOAD: Bad Wizard, "Agent"; The Sword, "Barael's Blade," "Lament for the Aurochs"

BELLE & SEBASTIAN

THE LIFE PURSUIT ★★

MATADOR

Scottish indie darlings hone their craft, misplace their spark

Belle & Sebastian are done giving their fans nasty surprises—their live shows no longer resemble slapdash rehearsals, and founder Stuart Murdoch has mostly stopped sharing the songwriting duties with less talented bandmates—but maybe they're finished with surprises →

I LOVE THIS CD!

HEATH LEDGER

Actor, *Brokeback Mountain*

SUN KIL MOON

TINY CITIES CALDO VERDE

"It's a whole CD of Modest Mouse covers done in a very simple, lovely style. I could listen to it all day long."



Mary J. Blige, playing Princess Leia in *Star Wars: Attack of the Trill*.

SINGLED OUT

R&B STAR MARRIES, MOVES FROM TORTURED TO CONTENT

MARY J. BLIGE

THE BREAKTHROUGH ★★ 1/2

GEFFEN

HEARTACHE AND PAIN are to Mary J. Blige as nine bullets are to 50 Cent: badges of authenticity turned persona-making scars. But 14 years and three Grammys after her debut, she's like a rapper who hasn't seen the block in ages: Married for two years, she's living domestic bliss, not singlehood's struggle. So for her seventh album, Her Highness had two options. She could take the aged-rapper road and keep singing about the hard-knock life—in the past tense. This was her approach on 2001's triple-platinum *No More Drama*—which marked her transition from long-suffering Mary to former-long-suffering Mary—and she dabbles in it here, too: "Good Woman Down" is a surprisingly catchy self-help song about the times she "went to the edge of the ledge but I didn't jump."

The other option is to—gasp!—make happy music, which she does on an album brimming with love songs. The plan to reinvigorate a persona verging on one-dimensional hits has one snag, though: her voice. For all

its emotional intensity, there isn't much variety; it can perform ache but not exuberance, anguish but not crazy-in-love ecstasy. So when, on the lushly layered ballad "No One Will Do," Blige croons "I don't want no one but you," it sounds like a moan, not an avowal. And when she declares, on the bouncy confessional "Baggage," "nobody had ever treated me this way," she seems wounded, not enraptured. Her ardent love songs ultimately come off not as love songs but standard ache-and-pain Mary tracks—making this album not quite the breakthrough it might have been.

Two stellar tracks, throwbacks to '60s-era Aretha Franklin ballads, are exceptions to that rule. On "Be Without You," with its gentle, piano-driven melody, and "I Found My Everything," a gospel-flavored love song featuring R&B smoothie Raphael Saadiq, her voice sounds subdued: softer, sweeter, peaceful enough to persuade us, finally, that she's really feeling the warm-and-fuzzy sentiments in the songs.

BAZ DREISINGER

DOWNLOAD: "No One Will Do," "Be Without You," "I Found My Everything"

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Say Anything ...is a Real Boy

Say Anything
...is a Real Boy



Ray Davies
reopens the
Bates Motel.



STILL KINKY!

ROCK'S GREATEST CRAB WRESTLES WITH MIDLIFE

RAY DAVIES

OTHER PEOPLE'S LIVES ★★★½
V2

THE CHARACTERS CLAIMING the spotlight in Ray Davies's first true solo album are not exactly strangers. They're the same oddballs and ordinary folks who wandered through the Kinks' 1968 acoustic idyll, *The Kinks Are the Village Green Preservation Society*, the landmark album Pete Townshend once called Davies's *Sgt. Pepper*. Now these types are grown, prosperous, more than a little confused and fair game for Davies, who has a most sensitive nose for human foibles. If *Village Green* was a small-town soap opera, this is the inevitable reunion tele-movie, where we watch once-adorable kids make big messes as they hit advancing age.

Davies, now 61, has always been a voyeur, and *Other People's Lives* delivers what its title promises: thirteen tart songs that ponder (and find perverse pleasure in) cruel twists of fate. Davies sketches "Next Door Neighbours" he's known all his life and observes the traps that ensnared each, from brazen ambition to outright madness. He tells of lovers who realize they don't know what it means to trust ("Creatures of Little Faith," which

ranks among Davies's all-time great songs). And when he tires of love, he follows bored rich people on holiday: His withering account of platinum-card entitlement, "The Tourist," establishes a new benchmark in crotchety rock.

With the Kinks, Davies might have cushioned these pointy-stick jabs with rococo music-hall trappings or, as happened when the band went adrift in the '80s, overwhelmed them with clumsy pseudo-metal. This assured and surprising record, by contrast, is uniformly minimal: It's built on the simple twitch of rock rhythm guitar and backing tracks as blunt—and as punchy—as the wordplay. The focus is on the oft-misunderstood Davies, and for the first time in decades he doesn't disappoint: From the opening vow "Things Are Gonna Change (The Morning After)" (which borrows its chord sequence from U2's "New Year's Day") through the desolate train song "The Getaway (Lonesome Train)," which glances back at *Village Green*, through the grave and gravely "Over My Head," the man perpetually described as a "cult hero" delivers sharp appraisals of humanity that you don't have to be in the cult to appreciate.

TOM MOON

DOWNLOAD: "All She Wrote," "Creatures of Little Faith," "The Tourist"

THE GUIDE NEW RELEASES

altogether. Following 2003's *Dear Catastrophe Waitress*, an extroverted pop jamboree overseen by sultan of excess Trevor Horn, *The Life Pursuit* sits squarely in the middle of B&S's comfort zone: never bad but rarely inspiring. Their world is still populated by art-school cuties and white-collar stiffies who spend half their time dreaming of a better life and the other half bopping to jaunty sunshine pop—a *Saturday Night Live* sketch couldn't spoof B&S better than they do themselves on "Funny Little Frog."

DORIAN LYNSKEY

DOWNLOAD: "Act of the Apostle Pt. 1," "Dress Up in You"

CAT POWER

THE GREATEST ★★★½

MATADOR

Indie gloom queen, raised in Georgia, gets a partial pick-me-up from '70s Memphis soul players

With a voice so exquisitely melancholy it sounds as if she never gets out of bed, Chan Marshall, a.k.a. Cat Power, is indie rock's poet laureate of depression. For her first album in three years, she recorded with vets of the 1970s Memphis soul scene, and like many unconventional cures, it partly works. The school of Al Green and Otis Redding is a source of sprightly joys and drooping self-pity, which perfectly suits Marshall's bipolar nature, and the finger-lickin' band inspires her to wonderfully carefree heights ("Gonna have a real good time/No more sad sad bad times"). But left to herself, a frightful gloom returns: On "Hate" she mutters a mantra of self-loathing ("I hate myself and I want to die") while strumming a guitar in a hypnotic daze, alone.

BEN SISARIO

DOWNLOAD: "The Greatest," "Could We"

CLEARLAKE

AMBER ★★★

DOMINO

Propulsive melancholy from a Brighton, U.K., quartet in constant evolution

Committed malcontents, Clearlake undercut the moroseness in their lyrics by boosting the vocals and the slamming of the drums. These four Brits make the most of form vs. content on their third album; Amber's best songs are tense little explosions of frustrated yearning and exultant pessimism. Singer-guitarist-co-producer Jason Pegg blends a croon with a wowl and pitches it just behind the beat, best showcased on the rouser "Finally Free." But the band occasionally lapse into easy irony ("Good Clean Fun": maundering miserableness) and cheap spite ("You Can't Have

Cat Power: "Now, where did I put that giant field?"



Me": self-absorption as revenge against a lover's lack of interest). At once more uneven and more wide-ranging than its predecessors, *Amber* finds Clearlake attempting grand arrangements and statements; they don't need them. Small, precise and bitter is better.

KEN TUCKER

DOWNLOAD: "Finally Free," "No Kind of Life," "It's Getting Light Outside"

COMET GAIN

CITY FALLEN LEAVES ★★★★★

KILL ROCK STARS

Older, wiser Brit discovers the acoustic guitar and his old diary

Old punks never seem to grow up; they just get sadder. Exhibit A is

David Feck: For more than a decade, Feck—along with a shifting cast of mostly female co-conspirators—has mined the scruffy edges of DIY hardcore, agitpop and even girl-group soul, all while staying true to his über-lefty political muse. His seventh album is a surprisingly tender love letter to London, his hometown (typical song title: "This English Melancholy"). On a few tracks—particularly the bilious "Daydream Scars" and the skip-worthy spoken-word bits—Feck gets his graying dander up and rages against "right-wing hate." But for the most part, *City Fallen Leaves* documents a once-bitter man refusing to look back in anger—"Days I Forgot to Write Down" and "Seven Sisters to

Silverlake" are lovely, gently plucked recollections of romances outgrown. Elsewhere, Feck even promises to "try and be happy." Punk as folk!

ANDY GREENWALD

DOWNLOAD: "The Fists in the Pocket," "Seven Sisters to Silverlake," "Just One More Summer Before I Go"

DAVE MATTHEWS BAND

WEEKEND ON THE ROCKS ★★★★★

BAMA RAGS/RCA

Didn't these guys put out a live album last month?

OOH!
VIOLIN
SOLOS!

On message boards across the land, longtime Dave Matthews Band fans gripe that the group has been on

autopilot for its last two studio albums. This live CD/DVD, which documents the last nights of DMB's *Stand Up* tour this past September, suggests the problem isn't subpar material but a boredom among the longstanding group members—how many dark corners does "#41" have left to explore, for example? Matthews and Co. amble gamely through new songs "Dreamgirl" and "American Baby," pull "Don't Burn the Pig" and "Halloween" off the scrap heap and cover the Zombies' late-psychedelic hit "Time of the Season," but they generally catch fire only when joined by guests such as steel-guitar innovator Robert Randolph, who makes the smoke rise on "Louisiana Bayou."

ANDREW BEAULON

DOWNLOAD: "Bartender," "The Stone"

THE DEREK TRUCKS BAND

SONGLINES ★★★★★

COLUMBIA

Young guitar guru makes jam record of the year—already!

To the uninitiated, Derek Trucks is another next-gen jammer, following the sandal-shod footsteps of the Grateful Dead and the Allman Brothers—a band he's even a member of, and whose longtime drummer, Butch Trucks, is his uncle. But the blond 26-year-old longhair, who has the air of a quiet backwoods mystic and covers surprisingly diverse tunes with his own band, has always been a wild card. Here he comes into his own, uncorking his eruptive, lava-lamp slide guitar on a set that interprets Delta blues and Pakistani Qawwali with equal authority. Dude even makes convincing use of a flutist(!). That this eclectic, soul-jazzy shred-fest comes from a scene famously unable to make worthwhile studio records makes the jams that much sweeter.

WILL HERMES

DOWNLOAD: "Sahib Teri Bandi/Maki Madni," "Crow Jane," "Volunteered Slavery"

THE CD WE'RE TOTALLY GAY FOR

ELBOW

LEADERS OF THE FREE WORLD

★★★★★

V2

Manchester and Iraq inspire the elegantly morose Brits' best yet

The title track and centerpiece of Elbow's third album may be a swaggering statement of contempt towards the architects of war in Iraq—it sounds like Radiohead's "Karma Police" crossed with a soccer chant—but these grumpy optimists prefer to grant a symphonic sweep to the everyday. Elbow's lifeblood is equal parts rain and alcohol. The slow-burning "Station Approach" evokes a drizzly train journey home to Manchester ("I feel like I designed the buildings I walk by") and the rousing "Forget Myself" casts an amused eye over northern nightlife—a bouncer with "a head like Mars," drinkers "falling in love every second song." Frontman Guy

Garvey croons like a more humane Thom Yorke or a sadder, wiser Chris Martin. He's too modest to promise to fix you, but his band's glittering, slo-mo art-rock, bruised romance and barfly poetry ("You only smoke 'cause it's something to share") offers its own brand of consolation.

DORIAN LYNKEY

DOWNLOAD: "Leaders of the Free World," "The Stops," "Great Expectations"



Elbow: "This was a bad place to set up our valet service."

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NIVEA FOR MEN MORE EVOLVED SKINCARE



Yellowcard in their day job as "crips."

HIGH STRUNG

VIOLIN PUNKS MOAN ABOUT THEIR NEW GIRLFRIEND: FAME

YELLOWCARD

LIGHTS AND SOUNDS ★★

CAPITOL

FOR THOSE STUDYING for the emo Fantasy Draft, Yellowcard are the easiest band of earnest, doe-eyed boys to spot. Why? They're the ones with the violin, an instrument that's usually like Kryptonite to rock bands. Proof: Kansas. More proof: the Corrs.

Of course, it wasn't the sight of fiddler Sean Mackin doing backflips in videos that broke Yellowcard's *Ocean Avenue* big in 2003—that credit goes to pint-sized frontman Ryan Key's breathless ability to deliver every can't-miss chorus of peppy hit singles "Ocean Avenue" and "Way Away" as if he was explaining the plot of a Molly Ringwald flick. Ubiquitous but kinda faceless, Yellowcard were the emo band you heard on the radio but didn't hang on your wall; their appeal hinged more on Key's emotional fearlessness (this is a man who wept after winning a VMA) than on his dexterity with emotions (the zenith of "Ocean Avenue" goes "If I could find you now/Things would get better!").

Unfortunately, Yellowcard's recording budget has gone up for album No. 3 (hello, wanky instrumentals!), just as their subject matter has dwindled. With no recent heartbreak war-zones to report from, they fall

back on the hoariest of post-platinum tropes: the perils of fame. To wit: *Lights and Sounds* is a rough concept album about a girl named, ahem, Holly Wood, who discovers that L.A. is actually a "City of Devils," gets high, sleeps around and on the last song—spoiler alert—dies. The awkward conceit actually works for a time: The title track, bursting with buzzing distortion, builds into a satisfying anti-glitz rant, and the shimmering, self-pitying "Down on My Head" should blare from slammed bedroom doors for months.

But a band that traffics in momentum can't afford to take their foot off the gas as often as Yellowcard does on woe-is-me ballads "Space Travel" ("She moves like a beam of light straight through this universe in my head") and "How I Go." And the less said about "Two Weeks From Twenty"—which relays the story of an Iraq war casualty via an ill-advised trumpet solo—the better. Emo acts can survive breakups. Breakthroughs, however, are another matter.

ANDY GREENWALD

DOWNLOAD: "Lights and Sounds," "Down on My Head"

RYAN KEY'S CURRENT LISTENING

EXPLOSIONS IN THE SKY
THE EARTH IS NOT ... TEMPORARY RESIDENCE

THE SHINS
CHUTES TOO NARROW SUB POP

DIMMU BORGIR

STORMBLÅST ★★

NUCLEAR BLAST

Nordic metal that even Andrew Lloyd Weber could love

Dimmu Borgir (Icelandic for "Dark Fortress") aren't your typical black-metal antichrists. They also love pseudo-symphonic cheese: key-boards worthy of *The Phantom of the Opera* or Yes mainman Rick Wakeman in his cape-waving, *Tales From Topographic Oceans* heyday put some Gothic fanfare into these sordid celebrations of "illness and plagues, torture and blight." Metal has always been the bastard child of classical, and Dimmu recognized that early on with *Stormblåst*, their second album. This remake of that 1996 release adds two new tracks and even more orchestral melodrama. Lyrical piano interludes provide breathing room between the wall of guitars, and dark-angel choirs scale Olympus while singer Shagrath gives it up for Beelzebub. Even hardcore headbangers might find this excessive, but that's the point.

GREG KOT

DOWNLOAD: "Alt Lys er Svnnet Hen," "Stormblåst"

THE ELECTED

SUN, SUN, SUN ★★

SUB POP

Side project from the former star of Nickelodeon's *Salute Your Shorts*

Blake Sennett can sing, "I'm the biggest star you'll ever see," and sound neither resentful, small nor the least bit sincere. He isn't even the biggest star in Rilo Kiley's pluperfect pop (that's Jenny Lewis), but his vocals choke up on him perfectly, à la Bright Eyes's Conor Oberst, and as with both those peers, he presumes an audience ready to hear what he has to say, which makes all the difference in underground pop: This former child television star has an erudite musical vocabulary but refuses to come off as a passive-aggressive aspirant. These amply melodic songs offer a style manual of orchestral pop and twinkly genre touches. Listen for the "preaching" sections, testified rather than sung—another apt way for Sennett to strike one of his beloved poses.

ERIC WEISBARD

DOWNLOAD: "Did Me Good" "Would You Come With Me"

ELECTRIC SIX

SEÑOR SMOKE ★★

METROPOLIS

Motor City mockers may be the greatest novelty band in rock history

Cheaper than plastic surgery and almost as safe, Electric Six's first



Jamie Foxx: "I freakin' love you, microphone!"

album since their great "Danger! High Voltage" single achieves an advance modern medicine has long pursued: It restores virginity. Submit to these tongue-in-cheek disco-rock readymades and it's as if you're hearing irony and an ass-kicking backbeat for the very first time. Electric Six are jokesters from Detroit ("Señor Smoke" was the nickname of Aurelio Lopez, a Detroit Tigers pitcher from the '80s), a U.S. bar-band equivalent of the U.K.'s Darkness—their irony so intricate and expressive it's like a whole new language. "Jimmy Carter" and "The Future Is in the Future" sport synths squealing like stuck piggies and vocals that boss you around. "Rock and Roll Evacuation" even gets political: "Mr. President, I don't like you: You don't know how to rock!" The party starts now.

RJ SMITH

DOWNLOAD: "Jimmy Carter," "Rock and Roll Evacuation," "Radio Ga Ga"

TH' FAITH HEALERS

PEEL SESSIONS ★★ 1/2

BA DA BING!

Mesmerizing, headbanging mantras from pissed-off Brits

Th' Faith Healers made England a considerably louder place in the early '90s. They were a spiky hedgehog of a band, with one big trick: Almost every song on this collection of 1992–1994 radio recordings is a blister-raising riff or two, repeated for four or five minutes while Tom Cullinan strives to blow out his guitar amp and Roxanne Stephen snarls a couple of irritable phrases as if they were mantras ("Bulkhead"'s lyric is two yelped words long). The performances (including some previously unreleased songs and cranked-up covers of two enduring pop hits, ABBA's "S.O.S." and Badfinger's "Without You") are more tightly wound here than on their studio albums, but the point isn't individual songs—it's the consistency and prickliness of the band's relentless, hypnotic roar.

DOUGLAS WOLK

DOWNLOAD: "Reptile Smile," "Moona Inna Joona"

JAMIE FOXX

UNPREDICTABLE **☆☆ 1/2**

J RECORDS

Proof that a sweet falsetto and an Oscar do not a classic album make

It's easy to dismiss J. Foxx as J. Lo: proof that a high-profile record deal can be bought with Hollywood stardom. Listen to Foxx's second album—his debut, *Peep This*, flopped in 1994—and it's even easier to dismiss him. Yes, Foxx plays piano and hits high notes; he proved it in *Ray* and in stellar spots on Kanye West singles. But here he sounds strained and insincere, as if acting the role of "R&B singer" (think R. Kelly meets Ray Charles). Except for the lovely, falsetto-filled piano ballad "Heaven," the production feels lethargic and unmelodic, verses by the Game and Ludacris sound mailed in and Foxx's lyrics are all corny come-ons and cheesy sentimentalisms. High drama works wonders on the big screen—but not here.

BAZ DREISINGER

DOWNLOAD: "Heaven"

KORN

SEE YOU ON THE OTHER SIDE

☆☆☆

VIRGIN

Survival-minded metalheads retool with Avril's hitmakers

Jonathan Davis is the bedroom-poster child for nü-metal's angry über-victims. Korn mixed gangsta rap's sinister sonics with detuned hard-rock guitars and spawned a legion of imitators. But a decade later, Disturbed and Linkin Park have hijacked their ideas, which leaves Korn just another could-be has-been. Enter Trent Reznor sidekick Atticus Ross and tunesmiths-for-hire the Matrix (Avril Lavigne, Hilary Duff) as co-producers; they sand down the newly slimmed-down quartet's hardest edges and jack up the choruses. Davis goes all Depeche Mode electronic as he croons "Tearjerker" and creeps with the Goths on "Love Song." It's a smart move. Less scary but more melodic, Korn guns for hits, not street cred.

GREG KOT

DOWNLOAD: "Love Song," "Throw Me Away"

I LOVE THIS CD!

MATT DAMON
Actor, *Syriana*



TREY ANASTASIO
SHINE COLUMBIA

"I like that he's doing three-minute songs these days instead of the Phish thing. He's trying to get on the radio for a change."

Rhett Miller is a handsome, handsome man ... with girl hair!



MATCHBOOK ROMANCE

VOICES **☆☆☆**

EPITAPH

Warped Tour veterans who got discovered by posting their music online

When this emo band changed their name from the Getaway to Matchbook Romance, it probably didn't mean they wanted to sound like a combination of Matchbox 20 and My Chemical Romance. But they do. The harder edges that caught the ears of

Epitaph bigwigs when the band was just an upstate New York mp3.com hopeful have been softened, and the increasingly arty leanings of leader Andrew Jordan—who, according to his press kit, "declared war on power chords"—course for more poetic territory. Jordan seems to have lost the war: Despite his vow, the record still packs some crunch, especially on the drag-racer single "Monsters." But without goth glamour or Fall Out Boy self-flagellation, *Voices* gets mired in a modern-rock middle.

LAURA SINAGRA

DOWNLOAD: "Monsters"



In Korn, they all look like the bassist.

RHETT MILLER

THE BELIEVER **☆☆☆ 1/2**

VERVE FORECAST

Lapsed alt-country frontman's second solo shot shows off his skills, but not quite his brilliance

Since 1995, with the Old 97's and now on two solo albums, Rhett Miller has been an exceptionally tuneful, clear, simple and poetic songwriter. He has a pro's knack, half Nashville and half Broadway, for turning ordinary English a few degrees till it reflects the light: "Sex in wartime is sweeter than peace," or "I have every confidence that she'll dismantle mine." Unfortunately, that second →



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Duncan Sheik:
"What marijuana
crop?"

example is borrowed from sideman Jon Brion, one more sign that the inspired pitch of the Old 97's' 1999 *Fight Songs* and 2001 *Satellite Rides* has slackened slightly. This does improve on their 2004 *Drag It Up*. But there's a little too much goop here, much of it front-loaded, as if Miller is convinced that nowadays the canniest pros soft-pedal their smarts.

ROBERT CHRISTGAU

DOWNLOAD: "I Believe She's Lying," "Fireflies"

BETH ORTON

COMFORT OF STRANGERS ★★★

ASTRALWERKS

The Comedown Queen explores life after the hangover

Beth Orton began her career as a house folkie for the polydrug-abusing all-nighter crowd who flocked to London's mid-'90s dance mecca, the Heavenly Social. Since then, her wispy-voiced ramblings through relationship malfunction have accrued college cachet, but it's been hard to tell one album from another. Her fourth CD meets that problem head-on, with Sonic Youth cohort Jim O'Rourke forging bolder soft-rock soundscapes that threaten, at best, to turn Orton into an oughties Rickie Lee Jones, especially when she muses quirkily on the tribulations of chickens ("They got a wishbone where their backbone should've grown"). Orton still oversteps the foul line that separates affectingly vulnerable from irritatingly feeble, but this is a step towards something more distinctive.

TONY POWER

DOWNLOAD: "Worms"

PHISH

NEW YEAR'S EVE 1995, LIVE AT MADISON SQUARE GARDEN

★★★1/2

JEMP/RHINO

A high-water mark in Phish concerts

This three-disc document show-

cases Phish's wily range, from Dead-head guitar jams ("Runaway Jim") to Frank Zappa-esque barbed whimsy ("Reba"); from sensible psychedelia ("Gamehenge Time Phactory") to just plain goofiness (the barbershop-quartet standard "Hello My Baby"). The New Year's Eve epic, taped nine years before they called it quits, is widely considered a high point in Phishology. To the extent that it offers both the delicate improvisations that distinguished the quartet from their jam-band bros (the meticulous chord meshings in "Reba," for instance, are entrancing) and the flaws they never surmounted ("Weekapaug Groove" is proof that they often spackled over their lousy vocals with day-glo instrumentals), it serves as a fitting summation of what it once meant to catch Phish.

KEN TUCKER

DOWNLOAD: "Reba," "Gamehenge Time Phactory," "The Squirming Coil"

PLUMB

CHAOTIC RESOLVE ★★★

CURB

Black-haired Christian mom sounds a lot like a band she inspired

Most goths flirt with nihilism, but Tiffany Arbuckle Lee has gone all the way with piety. Her sleek second solo album as Plumb sometimes sounds remarkably or even suspiciously similar to platinum-sellers Evanescence—almost identically voiced singer Amy Lee (no relation) cites Plumb as an influence—but only Tiffany would compare a lover's bad qualities to a cigarette: "You make it harder to breathe/You make my head hurt" ("Jekyll & Hyde"). Such refreshingly uncool sentiments make her alienation all the more urgent—the juicy bubblegum industrial of "Good Behavior" could inspire a goody-two-shoes riot. And Lee's range extends beyond her lavish purrs and howls: "Motion" makes a sure leap to the dance floor, while "Cut" offers a movingly simple, feel-

ing portrait of a self-injurer. Pop could use more women like this.

NICK CATUCCI

DOWNLOAD: "Motion," "Good Behavior"

ROBERT POLLARD

FROM A COMPOUND EYE ★★★

MERGE

On his first solo CD, the boozy bard of Dayton, Ohio, makes it a double

GOING SOLO AT AGE 48

Of Robert Pollard's unique achievements—recording hundreds of songs a year, drinking his weight in beer despite pushing 50—breaking up a group that never really existed ranks near the top. With as many personnel layoffs as GM, Guided By Voices were more brand than band for two decades, and this 26-song double album, his first since dissolving GBV in 2004, continues his legacy in its ratio of gems to trifles. "The Right Thing" perfectly marries Pollard's no-fi aesthetic and his arena-sized ambition; where he once would have left the song's intro as an unfinished, minute-long doodle, he now sees it through into a full-throttle one-riff romp. As ever, though, songs like "U.S. Mustard Company" are less interesting than their titles, and his guitar playing shows why he used to leave those duties to others. As double albums go, it's a hell of an EP.

STEVE KANDELL

DOWNLOADS: "The Right Thing," "Denied," "I'm a Widow"



Beth Orton
makes her bid
for a role in
Cabaret.

SAY ANYTHING

... IS A REAL BOY ★★★ 1/2

J RECORDS

The troubled leader of an L.A. emo band recently told MySpace readers about his problems with hallucinations

21-year-old Max Bemis has problems by the boatload: sexual frustration, belligerent housecats and, worst of all, bipolar disorder. Luckily for Max—and his legion of screaming teenage fans—he has an outlet: Say Anything, a musical alter ego that funnels (but certainly doesn't edit) Bemis's angst into impressively messy song-stories that gnaw at the soppy limitations of emo. Slowed by major-label politics and major mental issues, this is ... *Is a Real Boy*'s second release in two years, but the bonus disc of seven strong new songs and demos proves time hasn't dulled Bemis's savage wit or his equally savage evisceration of his scene ("You goddamn kids had best be gracious with the merch money you spend!") and himself. Best addition: a track called "I Will Never Write an Obligatory Song About Being on the Road and Missing Someone." Dare to dream.

ANDY GREENWALD

DOWNLOADS: "The Writting South," "Spidersong," "Wow, I Can Get Sexual Too"

DUNCAN SHEIK

WHITE LIMOUSINE ★★★

ZOE/ROUNDER

N.Y. dreamboat packs a lot of philosophy into his swanky pop

In 1996, Duncan Sheik's single "Barely Breathing" secured him an enduring slot on America's bistro and spa soundtracks. But commercial breakthroughs have their downsides, as this reluctant dreamboat discovered when his subsequent ambient-pop experiments generated more puzzlement than buzz. This disc is Sheik's goodbye to the rat race—a moody slideshow of gently rocking soundscapes in which every

I LOVE THIS CD!

TÉA LEONI
Actress, *Fun With Dick & Jane*

CAT STEVENS
MONA BONE JACKSON A&M

"I think 'Trouble' is the most beautiful song I've heard in my life. I have it on my iPod, and I play it constantly."

yummy hook is matched to a chewy lyric (about the war in Iraq, Oedipal angst, Buddhism) and subtle textures rule over catchiness. Still too pretty for hipsters, Sheik's music seems doomed to the non-category "adult pop." Better to call these rich constellations of tone and texture "artisanal"—handcrafted for the subtle palate to appreciate. Geeks will love the extra disc, which provides software so listeners can remix the record themselves.

ANN POWERS

DOWNLOAD: "White Limousine," "Hymn"

SHE WANTS REVENGE

SHE WANTS REVENGE ★★

PERFECT KISS/FLAWLESS/GEFFEN

Run! The fake goths are coming for your eyeliner and black stockings!

You know a genre has reached critical mass when you can't tell whether a new band is genuine or a *Saturday Night Live* spoof. Arriving even later to the back-in-black '80s revival party than the Bravery, L.A. duo She Wants Revenge embrace every cliché with melodramatic fervor. Former rapper Justin Warfield demonstrates his newfound Bauhaus-via-Interpol baritone, the basslines surf the upper registers like New Order's Peter Hook and the guitars mimic the Cure's glassy shimmer over a rote electroclash pulse. The closest SWR get to an identity of their own is the spacious torch song "Us." Perhaps it really is all tongue-in-cheek—that would explain the dreadful Instagram lyrics about fading streetlamps, torn-up photos and a woman who "tastes like a tear"—but the air of kohl-eyed solemnity suggests otherwise.

DORIAN LYNKEY

DOWNLOAD: "Us"

TEST ICICLES

FOR SCREENING PURPOSES ONLY

★★

DOMINO

U.K. buzz brats should spend less time practicing moves in front of the mirror, more writing songs

Screamo, the rock genre populated by shrieking depressives, is what happens when emo kids decide emo is too wimpy. Test Icicles is what happens when screamo kids decide screamo is too pleasant to listen to. Blogger-beloved and Britain-based, this trio has made a truly ugly debut, full of tortured guitars, battering drum machines and screeched complaints. To their credit, they pack one hell of a sonic punch, slamming together confrontational genres like speed-metal, rap-rock and the aptly named spazzcore. But in the prolonged absence of any remotely memorable melodies—or memorable noise, for that matter—and in the



The Veronicas cunningly obscure "The Veronicas Suck" graffiti.

prolonged presence of adolescent lyrics about drowning, broken bodies and "bitches" (a gangsta-ism they deploy only semi-ironically) it proves deadening, obnoxious stuff.

JONAH WEINER

DOWNLOAD: "Circle, Square, Triangle"

VARIOUS ARTISTS

I AM THE RESURRECTION: A TRIBUTE TO JOHN FAHEY ★★★½

VANGUARD

A rag-tag crew of odd folksters cover the ultimate rag-tag guitar god

John Fahey, who died of heart disease in 2001 at age 61, was a quirky giant of roots music, a scholar-picker of blues and folk whose driving, shaggy instrumentals birthed a whole subgenre of "Ameri-

can primitive guitar." Now Vanguard, which signed Fahey in the mid-'60s and just reissued his excellent *The Yellow Princess*, have gathered a tribe of American primitives to rework the master. For once, the motley character of most tribute records fits the subject. The singer-songwriter Peter Case shows off his trad chops, while the chamber-folkster Sufjan Stevens offers up a lushly arranged hymn; elsewhere, the sunbaked rockers of Calexico drag the old man into a smoky nightclub. All shine light on a maverick musician who placed himself squarely at the crossroads of tradition and eccentricity.

ERIK DAVIS

DOWNLOAD: Calexico, "Dance of Death"; Cul De Sac, "The Portland Cement Factory at Monolith, CA"

VARIOUS ARTISTS

MYSPACE RECORDS, VOL. 1 ★★

MYSPACE

Your biggest Internet time-waster, now wasting your stereo's time, too

You have a new friend request! Interests include: viral marketing, multimedia brand extension, emo. Dislikes: Subtlety, hip-hop, original songs from A-List bands. Would you like to accept this compilation CD as a friend? Stop ROFLing: Myspace.com isn't just for homework-avoiding anymore. Now, with its new record label, the wildly popular teen-networking site wants to dominate your iPod, too. But this first offering is swollen with castoffs from sensitive major-label warblers (C-grade Weezer, Fall Out Boy acoustic, etc.) as well as overblown downers from up-and-comers like Socratic and Waking Ashland. If the goal is to translate the website's 24/7 loud, dumb and fun underage carnality onto a disc, then only Hollywood Undead—an unsigned, ghoulish, Crew-colliding (as in 2 Live and Mötley) scenester septet—succeed with the gloriously doofy "No. 5." In other words: Friendship request denied. LBR!

ANDY GREENWALD

DOWNLOAD: AFI, "Rabbits Are Roadkill on Rt. 37"; Hollywood Undead, "No. 5"

THE VERONICAS

THE SECRET LIFE OF THE VERONICAS ★★★

SIRE

All the way from Down Under, meet the pop-rock Mary-Kate and Ashley

This 20-year-old Aussie twin act provides an answer to the important marketing question, What if Jessica and Ashlee were both Ashlee? Lisa and Jess Origliasso, or, more mellifluously, the Veronicas, hit our shores with lip-glossed sk8r-girl sass and a pile of tunes by hit producers. The Max Martin/Lukasz "Dr. Luke" Gottwald song "4ever"—a soft/loud, grown-girl seizure of sexual control—sounds like a remix of Kelly Clarkson's "Since U Been Gone," also penned by those indefatigable Swedes. And "When It All Falls Apart," by Madonna hit-man Billy Steinberg, has the marching, singalong wistfulness of great late-'80s arena pop. The ballads, which are copious, are dull, except the dutiful try at turning Tracy Bonham's grungy "Mother Mother" into a jail-bait tease—its cig puffs and skirt-hiking are more come-ons to men than flip-offs to ma.

LAURA SINAGRA

DOWNLOAD: "4ever," "When It All Falls Apart"

BLENDER APPROVED

THE BEST NEW RELEASES FROM THE PAST MONTHS



LIL WAYNE

THA CARTER II

CASH MONEY/UNIVERSAL

Young Weezy is all grown up, reping Nolia with scorching beats and lots (and lots) of cursing.



MADONNA

CONFESSIONS ON A DANCE FLOOR

WARNER BROS.

Mama Madge leaves the kids with a sitter and hits the roller disco.



THE STROKES

FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF EARTH

RCA

NYC coolsters trade their skinny ties for big fat riffs on this brawny, bleary third set.



VARIOUS ARTISTS

OUR NEW ORLEANS

Sometimes sad, sometimes joyous, always irrepressible—this tribute perfectly fits the city it honors.

THE 40 MOST POPULAR SONGS IN AMERICA

DIRTY SOUTH POSSES? TEENAGE LOVERMEN? NONE STAND A CHANCE AGAINST VIOLIN-WIELDING POP-PUNKS!



2

DEM FRANCHISE BOYZ

"I THINK THEY LIKE ME"

ON TOP OF OUR GAME

This Atlanta thug foursome presumably get their name from their all-star skills, not because they've got their own chain of Baskin-Robbins. Just signed to Jermaine Dupri's label, they're rocking clubs with this spare drum-and-synth jam, featuring their new boss, '90s tough gal Da Brat, and Bow Wow, whom they opened for in December.

HOW WE DID IT

The Most Popular Songs chart is based on radio and video airplay and album sales. Provided by HITSDailyDouble.com: "Proof that any idiot in the music business can have a Web site."



POSITION	TITLE	ARTIST	ALBUM/LABEL
1	"LIGHTS AND SOUNDS"	YELLOWCARD	LIGHTS AND SOUNDS CAPITOL
2	"I THINK THEY LIKE ME"	DEM FRANCHISE BOYZ	ON TOP OF OUR GAME SO SO DEF/VIRGIN
3	"YO (EXCUSE ME MISS)"	CHRIS BROWN	CHRIS BROWN JIVE
4	"DON'T FORGET ABOUT US"	MARIAH CAREY	THE EMANCIPATION OF MINI ISLAND
5	"SO SICK"	NE-YO	IN MY OWN WORDS DEF JAM
6	"WHEN I'M GONE"	EMINEM	CURTAIN CALL: THE HITS SHADY/AFTERMATH/INTERSCOPE
7	"KING WITHOUT A CROWN"	MATISYAHU	LIVE AT STUBB'S J DUB/OREPIC
8	"THERE IT GO (THE WHISTLE SONG)"	JUELZ SANTANA	WHAT THE GAME'S BEEN MISSING ROC-A-FELLA/DEF JAM
9	"CHECK ON IT"	DESTINY'S CHILD	#1'S COLUMBIA
10	"DANCE, DANCE"	FALL OUT BOY	FROM UNDER THE CORK TREE ISLAND
11	"SAYING SORRY"	HAWTHORNE HEIGHTS	IF ONLY YOU WERE LONELY VICTORY
12	"LUXURIOUS"	GWEN STEFANI	LOVE. ANGEL. MUSIC. BABY. INTERSCOPE
13	"RUN IT!"	CHRIS BROWN	CHRIS BROWN JIVE
14	"BE WITHOUT YOU"	MARY J. BLIGE	THE BREAKTHROUGH GEPHEN
15	"HEARD 'EM SAY"	KANYE WEST FEAT. ADAM LEVINE	LATE REGISTRATION ROC-A-FELLA
16	"ANIMALS"	NICKELBACK	ALL THE RIGHT REASONS ROADRUNNER
17	"SOUL SURVIVOR"	YOUNG JEEZY FEAT. AKON	LET'S GET IT: THUG MOTIVATION 101 DEF JAM
18	"HYPNOTIZE"	SYSTEM OF A DOWN	HYPNOTIZE AMERICAN/COLUMBIA
19	"GRILLZ"	NELLY	SWEAT/SUIT FO REEL/UNIVERSAL
20	"SOUL MEETS BODY"	DEATH CAB FOR CUTIE	PLANS ATLANTIC
21	"BECAUSE OF YOU"	KELLY CLARKSON	BREAKAWAY RCA
22	"TWISTED TRANSISTOR"	KORN	SEE YOU ON THE OTHER SIDE VIRGIN
23	"HUNG UP"	MADONNA	CONFESSIONS ON A DANCE FLOOR WARNER BROS.
24	"DARE"	GORILLAZ	DEMON DAYS VIRGIN
25	"FIREMAN"	LIL' WAYNE	THA CARTER 2 CASH MONEY/UNIVERSAL
26	"TALK"	COLDPLAY	X&Y CAPITOL
27	"YOU'RE BEAUTIFUL"	JAMES BLUNT	BACK TO BEDLAM CUSTARD/ATLANTIC
28	"THE SUFFERING"	COHEED AND CAMBRIA	GOOD APOLLO, I'M BURNING STAR IV... COLUMBIA
29	"STICKWITU"	PUSSYCAT DOLLS	PUSSYCAT DOLLS A&M/INTERSCOPE
30	"BOM BOM BOM"	LIVING THINGS	AHEAD OF THE LIONS JIVE
31	"THE REAL THING"	BO BICE	THE REAL THING RCA
32	"NTH DEGREE"	MORNINGWOOD	MORNINGWOOD CAPITOL
33	"NASTY GIRL"	NOTORIOUS B.I.G. FEAT. DIDDY	DUETS BAD BOY/ATLANTIC
34	"PHOTOGRAPH"	NICKELBACK	ALL THE RIGHT REASONS ROADRUNNER
35	"GOLD DIGGER"	KANYE WEST	LATE REGISTRATION ROC-A-FELLA
36	"LAFFY TAFFY"	D4L	DOWN FOR LIFE DEE MONEY/ASYLUM/ATLANTIC
37	"STAY FLY"	THREE 6 MAFIA	MOST KNOWN UNKNOWN COLUMBIA/SONY URBAN
38	"SHAKE"	YING YANG TWINS FEAT. PITBULL	UNITED STATE OF ATLANTA TVT
39	"WAKE ME UP WHEN SEPTEMBER ENDS"	GREEN DAY	AMERICAN IDIOT REPRISE
40	"IN THE ROUGH"	ANNA NALICK	WRECK OF THE DAY COLUMBIA



5

NE-YO

"SO SICK"

IN MY OWN WORDS

One of the new artists signed by some suit-wearing record exec named Shawn Carter, this Arkansas-born R&B singer has written songs for Beyoncé, Mary J. Blige and Chris Brown. You can catch the video for "So Sick," the second single off his debut, in heavy rotation on MTV2, which named him an Artist to Watch.

11

HAWTHORNE HEIGHTS

"SAYING SORRY"

IF ONLY YOU WERE LONELY

Ohio's huggable emo-poppers conquered the Warped Tour and sold 500,000 copies of their first album. So why hasn't your cool older brother ever heard of them? Because he's old ... duh! They'll be playing this apologetic hit for the kids all spring long when they hit the road with Fall Out Boy and the All-American Rejects.



MORNINGWOOD

"NTH DEGREE"

MORNINGWOOD

If Richard Simmons, the Power Rangers and Willy Wonka threw a house party, it would sound like this ecstatic dance-pop jam, the debut single from this buzzy New York foursome. They just kicked off a tour with Head Automatica and will hit Austin, New York and other cities with high indie-rock populations in the coming months.

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- indieWIRE

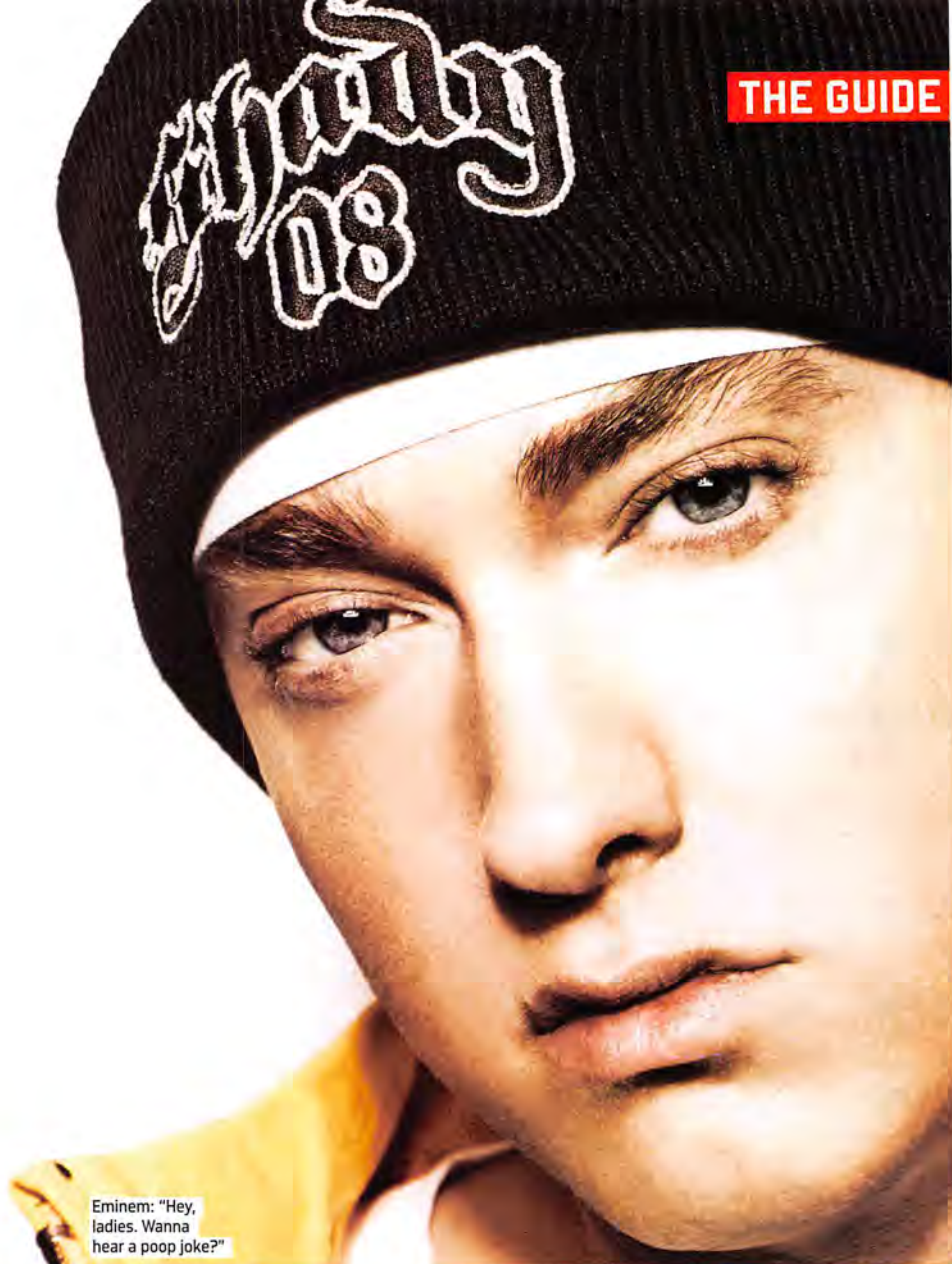
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AQUAFINA
Pure Water • Perfect Taste

IFC
tv, uncut.





Eminem: "Hey, ladies. Wanna hear a poop joke?"

EM AND EM

POLITICAL ACTIVIST OR GROSS-OUT KING: WHICH IS THE REAL SLIM SHADY?

EMINEM

CURTAIN CALL: THE HITS ★★★

SHADY/AFTERMATH/INTERSCOPE

WHO WOULD'VE GUESSED, after lyrics about raping (his mom), dismembering (Pam Anderson) and stabbing (his ex-wife, himself, others), that Eminem's legacy would be his sensitivity—his empathy for fans, his love for his daughter—as much as his assholiness? But that's the case he lays out on his first best-of set. It suggests a man at a crossroads, or maybe just a schizophrenic's coming of age.

From the start, Eminem captured the adolescent psyche as well as any artist since James Dean. See "Lose Yourself," from the film *8 Mile*, which conjures the thrill and nausea of growing up male in public—even

if your audience is just family, friends, girlfriends. Its breathless verses, constantly ramping up, clotted with internal rhymes, are pure fight-or-flight, the sound of a hypothalamus in full spasm. And it's as much an all-purpose, carpe diem, big-brother pep-talk as a song about a besieged rapper.

The other highpoints show a similar solidarity. "Stan" appears both in its original form, from *The Marshall Mathers LP*, and as a lesser version performed at the 2001 Grammy Awards, with Elton John replacing Dido on the vocal hook—an attempt to exonerate the rapper from the gay-hating charges that arose over that CD's malicious material. "Stan" remains one of the most touching songs ever about fandom, even if its implicit denial of responsibility for role-model-starved nutjobs is a tad self-serving.

"Sing for the Moment" is another trou-

bled-kid-narrative-cum-self-defense with an empathic wallop. And both "Mockingbird" and "When I'm Gone" address Em's relationship with daughter Hailie in a searing mix of love and guilt. The latter, by far the best of three new songs, is especially chilling—a string-laden dreamscape in which the rapper stares down his failures as a dad and kills himself.

While Em loves drama, he's a prankster first and foremost. His signature hits, "My Name Is" and "The Real Slim Shady," may be funnier now than they were back when they boomed from every suburban car system, even if you can't exactly remember who Tom Green or Fred Durst were.

Yet much of Eminem's weight came from being "the king of controversy," as he crowned himself in "Without Me," and that reign may be ending. 2004's *Encore* sold well but registered merely a blip on the cultural radar; its startling anti-Bush rap, "Mosh" (oddly not included here), was released just days before the presidential election, arriving too late to have much influence. Now, Em's pal 50 Cent and Kanye West are hip-hop's new crossovers.

That's not to predict that Eminem's reign of lyrical terror is over. But "When I'm Gone" aside, the new material here is embarrassing. "Shake That" finds him trying to get crunk on a lukewarm beat, and not even Nate Dogg's funk chants redeem limp boozing-and-blowjob verses. Weaker still is "Fack," a comic porn rap involving an unfortunate gerbil who seems to have escaped from the gross-out jokes in the X-rated documentary *The Aristocrats*.

Sure, lots of artists put out hits CDs with crummy new tracks. But even "Stan's Mixtape," the seven-track disc included with the expanded edition, falls short. It opens on the remix of Notorious B.I.G.'s nasty psychosexual fantasy "Dead Wrong," with Eminem big-upping cannibalism, and the rest is familiar and similarly noxious: the gay-baiting "Criminal," and "Shit on You," a track with his insane clown posse, D12. C'mon, Em: a "mixtape" without unreleased freestyles? Didn't 50 teach you about giving folks what they want?

That's the question here. Mathers is now a 33-year-old dad with a 10-year-old daughter. After making music history by harnessing the rage of a fucked-over white kid in all its ugliness and self-aware hilarity, his most inspired recent songs involve denouncing the Iraq war and wrestling with paternal duty. Is this what fans want? Or do they want Em sticking rodents in his butt? Assuming the retirement rumors are untrue, that's what he'll have to figure out.

WILL HERMES

DOWNLOAD: "When I'm Gone," "Lose Yourself," "Stan (Feat. Dido)"

THE SCORE



A CLASSIC



GREAT



GOOD



MEDIOCRE



FOUL

JOHNNY ADAMS

THE GREAT JOHNNY ADAMS
BLUES ALBUM ★★★★★

ROUNDER

Relaxed, suave blues singer who died of cancer played "mouth trombone" on his records

In New Orleans, Johnny Adams (1932–1998) was R&B royalty, billed as "the Tan Canary," with a pop recording career that began in 1959 and a deep-soul voice that could be suave or mournful or airborne. Rounder Records started recording him in 1984 with uncluttered, in-the-pocket combos that included Louisiana musicians like piano tickler Mac (Dr. John) Rebennack. This collection sticks to blues songs, a choice that doesn't limit Adams at all; He's funny, funky, jazzy, desolate and sometimes all of them at once. It's a fine way to discover a musician who always deserved to be more than a local hero.

JON PARELES

DOWNLOAD: "Imitation of Love," "Laughin' and Clownin'"

APB

SOMETHING TO BELIEVE IN ★★★

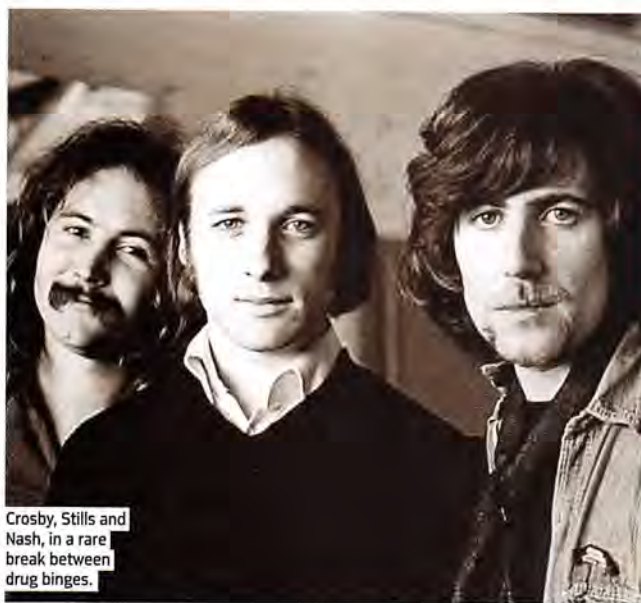
YOUNG AMERICAN

Discovered: Missing link in punk-funk family tree

This little-known Scottish trio were either a few years too late or two decades ahead of their time. APB's reissued 1985 debut collects their early singles, a few of which enjoyed fleeting success on U.S. college radio and in New York clubs, and throws in a second disc of live tracks and unreleased material. Back then, they were Gang of Four imitators, but with less intensity and without the politics (which misses the whole point of Gang of Four). Their white-boy funk, which paired sinewy grooves with earnest yelps, must have seemed passé, a postpunk relic in a new wave era. The intervening years have been kind, though: Now that jittery vocals and elastic basslines are fashionable again, these onetime also-rans can take their place in the gene pool as Franz Ferdinand and the Rapture's lost forefathers.

DENNIS LIM

DOWNLOAD: "Shoot You Down," "What Kind of Girl?"



Crosby, Stills and Nash, in a rare break between drug binges.

BLACK MERDA

THE FOLKS FROM MOTHER'S
MIXER ★★★★★

FUNKY DELICACIES

Excavated black rock from Detroit in the funkadelic early 1970s



These black musicians took a cue from Alice's white rabbit and disappeared down into a hole. Four

Mississippians who relocated to Detroit's R&B scene, pop enough to have backed the Temptations at Motown, they went psychedelic and never came back. With heavy guitars, sweet soul harmonies and paranoid Vietnam-era lyrics, their only two albums, released in 1970 and 1972 and both fully preserved on this CD, capture a moment when a murder ballad ("My Mistake") could become a string-laden acid trip, and rock thought it could become anything. "Reality will cause your fantasies to die," they sing, and it became an accurate prediction—Black Merda tanked and vanished. But their unreplicable artistic lineage produced an enigmatic, woozy wonder.

ERIC WEISBARD

DOWNLOAD: "My Mistake," "I Don't Want to Die"

I LOVE THIS CD!

SIENNA MILLER
Actress, *Casanova*



BLONDIE
EAT TO THE BEAT
CHRYSALIS

"I like Debbie Harry because she's such a strong, independent woman, and that comes through in all of her lyrics."



Aaron Carter: He obviously hasn't read our review.

BILLY BRAGG

BREWING UP WITH BILLY BRAGG
★★★★

THE INTERNATIONALE/LIVE &
DUBIOUS ★★★

YEP ROC

Shots across the barricade from England's premier folk-punk

English punk gave new voice to the angry young man, but Billy Bragg exposed his big red heart. Bragg's explosive take on folk—he performed solo, playing buzzy electric guitar and crooning songs of romance and revolution in a foghorn baritone—refreshed protest music and produced some of the best love songs of the '80s. His 1984 full-length debut has him learning "the meaning of unrequited" and ranting about truth in media; it's the winner in Yep Roc's Bragg reissue series. The combo *The Internationale/Live & Dubious* stresses Bragg's radical side, combining his 1990 leftist hymnal with live stuff that shows how to inspire the masses. Four of Bragg's out-of-print early releases are now expanded to deluxe two-CD sets (or, for the completists, in one big box); start here.

ANN POWERS

DOWNLOAD: "St. Swithin's Day," "A Lover Sings," "To Have and to Have Not"

AARON CARTER

COME GET IT: THE VERY BEST OF
AARON CARTER ★½

JIVE/LEGACY

A Backstreet brother runs for governor of South Boringville

Just as it turned out that the guiding artistic principle of Will Smith's early work was "nothing that will disqualify me from holding public office next

Willennium," the Backstreet Baby Brother must plan on running for something, someday. With each song phrased like a campaign speech that never goes negative, devoid of everything but pubescent charisma, from LFO clone "To All the Girls" to rap fiasco "Aaron's Party (Come Get It)," the littlest Carter does his public service by taking the 'hood out of childhood, one song at a time. And yet he somehow managed to get between BFFs Hilary Duff and Lindsay Lohan; he must be rocking something strong, something electable, something that will lead him safely out of the studio and into his future as the governor of Disneyland. Please.

JANE DARK

DOWNLOAD: None

CROSBY, STILLS AND NASH

CROSBY, STILLS AND NASH
★★★★

DAYLIGHT AGAIN ★★★

ATLANTIC/RHINO

First flash of greatness from the kingpins of vocal homily

David Crosby, Stephen Stills and Graham Nash had each sung with hit bands (the Byrds, Buffalo Springfield and the Hollies), but when they united in 1969, their delicate, woven harmonies had all the tranquility of a warm fireplace. CSN's fitful career together caught both the strident indignation of folk and the reassuring placidness of lullabies, but until these "high definition" reissues, their shadings were often blurred. There are bonus tracks on both discs—the self-titled debut offers a ragged rehearsal of "Teach Your Children" and a dejected Stills's treatment of "Everybody's Talkin'"; and four songs are appended to 1982's *Daylight Again*. But the lure is the sonic upgrade: The singing is crisp, and little guitar asides and other nuances jump out.

TOM MOON

DOWNLOAD: "Suite: Judy Blue Eyes," "Helplessly Hoping," "Southern Cross"



Delta 5 glumly await the invention of color photography.

DELTA 5

SINGLES & SESSIONS 1979-81

★★★★

KILL ROCK STARS

British punk full of frailty and sexual mockery

It's not an insult to say that Delta 5 peaked with their first single—with its quicksand groove and epileptic guitar breaks, "Mind Your Own Business" is one of the juiciest fruits of the new wave. The sister band to the better-known Leeds extremists of the same era, Gang of Four and the Mekons, Delta 5 were fronted by three chanting women, two of whom played bass. They wore their uncertainty proudly: Most of their songs are built around their warbling, accusatory voices ("Who likes sex only on Sundays? YOU, you, you, YOU!") and unstable funk rhythms that flirted with atonality. This collection of their early singles, appending almost-as-awesome live tapes and BBC radio recordings, amounts to the smashing album they never made the first time around.

DOUGLAS WOLK

DOWNLOAD: "Mind Your Own Business," "Singing the Praises"

D.O.A.

WAR ON 45 ★★★

SUDDEN DEATH

Stalwart Vancouver punks reenact the anti-war battles of the '80s

Ronald Reagan's presidency inspired scores of righteous punk broadsides, and now Dubya's has done much the same—spurred the reissue of some furious anti-Reagan punk. Observing the American maelstrom from their safe Canadian home, the Clash-struck D.O.A. released the original seven-song *War on 45* (riffing on the then-popular "Stars on 45" medleys) in 1982; this compilation adds 11 thematically related tunes. As always with D.O.A., vehemence trumps subtlety: The titles of songs like "Liar for Hire" say it all, and four of the five covers are un inventive. But the supersonic-blues version of Bob



Living Colour glumly rue the invention of color photography.

Dylan's "Masters of War" is a corker, and the raucous yet rueful "Smash the State" would be bracing even if John Kerry had won.

MARK JENKINS

DOWNLOAD: "Masters of War," "Smash the State"

LIVING COLOUR

EVERYTHING IS POSSIBLE: THE VERY BEST OF LIVING COLOUR

★★★

EPIC/LEGACY

Four NYC black guys who ♥ arena rock

Living Colour did more straddling than a Chinese balance-beam queen. They were black guys playing "white" music—flashy metal. They were headed by avant garde guitarist Vernon Reid, yet trying to get over on MTV in the late '80s ("Cult of Personality" was in heavy rotation). They were sophisticates—the singer was an actor, the drummer dug jazz—wooing the heartland. And if in the end they never triggered the black rock revolution they proclaimed, nor saw their through-the-back-door

lessons in tolerance ricochet through the marketplace, they had plenty of great moments: "Cult of Personality," an arena-rock song that warned against trusting arena rockers, but the anti-Presley "Elvis Is Dead" and more are still rafter-raisers from brothers that time forgot.

RJ SMITH

DOWNLOAD: "Cult of Personality," "Memories Can't Wait"

LOS LOBOS

WOLF TRACKS: THE VERY BEST OF LOS LOBOS ★★★★★

RHINO

Holding off on the fancy stuff for a Chicano-style classic-rock set

Although they surfaced on the punkoid Slash label and got all trippy in their Latin Playboys side project, at bottom these East L.A. winners of a 2001 *Billboard* magazine lifetime achievement award are one of the strongest straight-ahead rock bands of the past quarter-century. In a sense, their most important member is their most obscure: bassist Conrad Lozano,

implacably anchoring blues, boogie, polka, two-step, corrido and what-have-you variants on a solid four-four rhythm. With a brief detour into Mexican folkloricism, which doesn't mean "La Bamba," this 20-year, 20-song overview has a groove that's Latin mostly by way of spicing, accent and aura. It's an assimilationist showpiece that proves Mexican Americans are as American as any other kind—except that some of them write much better songs.

ROBERT CHRISTGAU

DOWNLOAD: "A Matter of Time," "Kiko and the Lavender Moon"

MOTÖRHEAD

OVERKILL ★★★★★

ACE OF SPADES ★★★★★

SANCTUARY

The blues + methamphetamines = metal's most brazen band

With concussive double-bass-drum pounding, minute-and-a-half-long guitar solos and bass lines that rumble like a muffler-less hot rod, these skuzzy Brits created the blueprint for speed metal—and then promptly puked on it. Close to 30 years after Motörhead's debut, four of the band's first five records have been reissued—along with a 1984 best-of and an album of BBC sessions—each featuring a full disc of B-sides and live tracks. The two most essential purchases are the 1979 sophomore LP, *Overkill*, in which the trio first nailed their mix of warp-speed blues and gruff melody, and *Ace of Spades*, the high-water mark that followed the next year. With hooks as outsized as frontman Lemmy Kilmister's libido, *Spades* is the rare metal album that you can actually dance to, and it boasts the best song ever about shagging



Motörhead prove that not showering can make you cross-eyed.

underage groupies ("Jailbait"). "I don't want to live forever," Kilmister famously bellows on the album's title cut. Too late for that.

JASON BRACELIN

DOWNLOAD: "Ace of Spades," "The Chase Is Better Than the Catch," "Overkill"

LINDA RONSTADT

THE BEST OF LINDA RONSTADT:
THE CAPITOL YEARS ★★★★★

CAPITOL

Pinup hottie of the '70s brought heartbreak and heat to her hits

Sex juice: Linda Ronstadt's voice dripped with it in the early '70s, a decade before she reinvented herself as a demure, white-gloved '50s lady-in-waiting to the likes of Ella Fitzgerald and Billie Holiday. This compilation collects the four Capitol albums (plus outtakes) in which she wailed like a barefoot wild thing, planting her signature on songs by Hank Williams, Bob Dylan, Neil Young and others. You can hear her girlish voice ripen into the heartbroken throb of the albums *Linda Ronstadt* (1971) and *Heart Like a Wheel* (1974). The arrangements also deepen from thin, clattery pop-country into the definitive '70s L.A. studio blend in which all roads, from New York to Nashville, lead to Southern California. Ronstadt's singing is hot, wet and gorgeous.

STEPHEN HOLDEN

DOWNLOAD: "Long Long Time," "Birds," "It Doesn't Matter Anymore"

SLY AND THE FAMILY STONE

DIFFERENT STROKES BY
DIFFERENT FOLKS ★★

EPIC/LEGACY

All-star record in tribute to an R&B mastermind who hasn't been seen in public since 1993

If James Brown was funk's great architect, Sly Stone figured out how the structure should be peopled: with a diverse, raucous, socially conscious party. His vision was exemplified by the Family Stone, his all-the-colors-of-the-ghetto band, and communicated in anthems to good times and racial tolerance that remain righteous and irresistible three decades on. This cover-versions-slash-remix disc—with the Roots, John Legend, Joss Stone, D'Angelo, Steven Tyler, Chuck D and a peace train of others—promises a tribute in the groovily heterogeneous spirit of the master. Too much of it descends into mic-hogging and much-love-to-my-man-Sly sentimentality, but when Big Boi and friends do a playfully dandy "Runnin' Away" and Janet Jackson offers a pumped mash-up of "Thank You" and her "Rhythm Nation 1814," the message of mingling self-respect with dance-floor heat comes through loud and clear.

BEN SISARIO

DOWNLOAD: Janet Jackson and DJ Reset, "Thank You Rhythm Nation 1814"

BLENDER APPROVED

THE BEST REISSUES FROM THE PAST MONTHS



BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN

BORN TO RUN (30TH ANNIV. ED.)

COLUMBIA

Beefed up with vintage concert footage, it's the rumbling epic that turned a Jersey kid into a legend.



NEW ORDER

SINGLES

WARNER BROS./RHINO

England's punk-survivors-turned-pop-craftsmen put on a 20-year workshop in how to write the perfect melody.



JACKSON BROWNE

RUNNING ON EMPTY

RHINO

The smoothed-out king of '70s Cali rock chronicles life on the road in exquisitely world-weary detail. *Sigh.*



VARIOUS ARTISTS

CRUNK HITS

TVT

Lil Jon, Usher and Ciara, oh my—it's all the pimp-cup-guzzling, booty-destroying beats you'll ever need to get low.



Ja Rule, shortly after reading the latest *Billboard* chart.

REISSUES IN BRIEF BY JON YOUNG

AFRIKA BAMBAATA & SOULSONIC FORCE

PLANET ROCK THE ALBUM

★★★★

DBK WORKS

This Bronx DJ achieved a hip-hop landmark with the 1982 12-inch single "Planet Rock," fusing electronic beats, Euro synths and exuberant chanting. Other nearly-as-fine tracks include "Go Go Pop," a surging anthem with the great D.C. band Trouble Funk, and the brusque "Renegades of Funk," covered by Rage Against the Machine.

ENO MOEBIUS ROEDELIOUS

AFTER THE HEAT ★★½

WATER

Before producing U2, Brian Eno joined Dieter Moebius and Hans-Joachim Roedelius of Germany's spacey Cluster to make enticing egghead pop in 1978. The murmuring electronics, delicate melodies and ominous undercurrents lend these fluid tracks the quality of an unsettling film score. Lovely and lonely, like a moonwalk through a synthesizer factory.

JA RULE

EXODUS ★★½

THE INC

Jeff Atkins appeared to be a pretty rough character—until 50 Cent started picking on him. Dented image aside, the gruff MC's retrospective delivers thrilling tales of hard living on "Holla, Holla" and "It's Murda" (featuring DMX and Jay-Z); softer collaborations with Ashanti and Jennifer Lopez undermine the swagger.

KENNY ROGERS

21 NUMBER ONES ★★

CAPITOL

Best known for the loping poker metaphors of "The Gambler," country crooner Rogers is so laid-back

you may be tempted to dial 911. After the insomnia-curing "Lady" (written by Lionel Richie) and "You Decorated My Life," his duet with Dolly Parton on the gentle toe-tapper "Islands in the Stream" seems like a dangerously manic outburst.

PETE TOWNSHEND

GOLD ★★

HIP-O

Since his 1972 solo debut, Townshend has produced more (and more interesting) new music under his own name than with the Who. Muting the band's toxic bluster—slightly—he touches on everything from romance ("Let My Love Open the Door") to bad behavior ("Rough Boys"), but his thin voice rarely does justice to the ambitious material.

VARIOUS ARTISTS

DOO WOP VOCAL GROUP GREATS

★★★★

SHOUT! FACTORY

Despite endless repackaging, the best doo-wop singles of the '50s and '60s retain their pizzazz, thanks to cocky, unslick performances. Among the 60-track set's high points: the Miracles' neurotic "You've Really Got a Hold on Me," covered by the Beatles, and Hank Ballard and the Midnighters' hilariously sleazy "Work With Me Annie," sure to embarrass squares even today.

VARIOUS ARTISTS

OHM+: THE EARLY GURUS OF ELECTRONIC MUSIC: 1948-1980

★★★★

ELLIPSIS ARTS

That's abstract experimental music, not Depeche Mode. If the gurgles, farts and bleats generated by such oddballs as Louis and Bebe Barron and Raymond Scott (playing the homemade clavivox and electronium) don't scream instant party, there's still plenty of fun to be had, in a bizarre, brain-scrambling way.

GUEST LIST

COMPETITIONS, EVENTS
AND OTHER FUN STUFF
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SHOULD KNOW ABOUT



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On November 22, 2005, Blender teamed up with Intel®, the Cyber Athlete Professional League (CPL) and White Castle to throw the official after party of the CPL World Tour Grand Final in New York. Hundreds of gamers converged on Times Square for the first annual competition and party at the Nokia Theater. Guests got to play the latest games on killer cool Intel® platforms, including mobile gaming on Centrino™ mobile technology, watch professional gamers play and feast on White Castle's signature mini-burgers. Johnathan Wendel, aka "Fatal1ty," defeated "Vo0" and became the greatest gamer in the world and won a giant check for \$150,000. Then, gamers got an even bigger treat: an amazing live performance from chart toppers The Click Five!



The Click Five plays Quake 4



The Click Five exclusive performance



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THE ROLLING STONES

PART I: THE 1960s AND '70s

NASTY, VIOLENT, CONFUSING, THEY TURNED BLUES RIFFS INTO ROCK MAELSTROMS BY JODY ROSEN



THE ROLLING STONES crowned themselves "The World's Greatest Rock & Roll Band" in 1969 as a marketing slogan, but they'd long since established it as a fact. Formed in London in 1962, they were a bad-boy alternative to the Beatles; their attitude of defiance and nonchalance became the perennial rock & roll posture. Led by the songwriting team of London School of Economics graduate Mick Jagger and living drug sponge Keith Richards, anchored by bassist Bill Wyman and drummer Charlie Watts, the Stones changed styles—Renaissance balladry, psychedelia, disco, country—as often as they changed girlfriends. They remained loyal only to the blues, which they channeled to create dark, swinging, transcendent rock, soaked in sex and decadence. In the '60s and '70s, deaths, lineup changes, drug busts and paternity suits threatened to eclipse the music, but ultimately added to their mystique.

The Rolling Stones, 1966 (left to right): Charlie Watts, Bill Wyman, Brian Jones, Keith Richards, Mick Jagger.

ESSENTIAL

AFTERMATH ABKCO, 1966

★★★★★



The Stones' seventh album was their first composed entirely of originals, and it proved that winsome hooks were not incompatible

with snide lyrics. The exotic instrumentation was a triumph for Brian Jones—the Stones' founding lead guitarist and foremost experimentalist—who plays marimba, dulcimer and, on "Paint It, Black," slinky, elegant sitar lines. Jagger, meanwhile, revs up his scourge-of-womankind shtick; "Under My Thumb" is a notorious misogynist diatribe, but the organ-driven stomper "Stupid Girl" is even nastier.

Download: "Paint It, Black," "Under My Thumb," "I Am Waiting"

BEGGARS BANQUET ABKCO, 1968

★★★★★



After dabbling in psychedelia, the Stones reconnected with their skanky muse. *Banquet* was packed with smutty talk and images of late-'60s social

upheaval. At the center was the menacingly groovy "Sympathy for the Devil," in which Jagger played the Dark Lord as debauched, debonair man-about-town, a persona he liked enough to keep for several years.

Download: "Sympathy for the Devil," "Street Fighting Man"

STICKY FINGERS VIRGIN, 1971

★★★★★



In 1969, Brian Jones was found face-down in his pool, the victim of what a coroner called "death by misadventure." The Stones were prodigious drug users, and narcotics seeped into this ramshackle masterpiece, especially "Sister Morphine," a terrifying overdose song. The themes are dark—even party-hearty single "Brown Sugar" has lyrics about rape and the African slave trade—but the playing is festive, with Jones's replacement Mick Taylor blazing in guitar-hero mode.

Download: "Brown Sugar," "Wild Horses," "Moonlight Mile"

EXILE ON MAIN ST. VIRGIN, 1972

★★★★★



"It's a bit overrated," Jagger said of the Stones' celebrated double album, and it's true that they've recorded stronger collections. But for

sonic grandeur, this skeeze-rock epic, recorded in Richards' mansion on the French Riviera, where they were hiding from British tax men, has scarcely been topped. The vocals are buried, sometimes to the point of unintelligibility, and surrounded by a whirlpool: wailing gospel, horn bursts, thundering piano and interlocking guitars.

Download: "Rocks Off," "Tumbling Dice"

SOME GIRLS VIRGIN, 1978

★★★★★



With Richards mired in heroin addiction, the Stones laid low for much of the mid-'70s, but reemerged with this irresistible set of songs reflecting

Jagger's immersion in New York City nightlife. Their most danceable (and best-selling) album is a showcase for Watts and, especially, Wyman, whose exuberant bass powers "Miss You," the greatest disco tune ever recorded by a rock group. Rev. Jesse Jackson denounced them for the lyric "black girls just want to get fucked all night." Jagger's supposed response: "Fuck 'im if he can't take a joke."

Download: "Miss You," "Shattered"

SINGLES COLLECTION: THE LONDON YEARS ABKCO, 1989

★★★★★



There have been many Stones compilations, and most are a mess. The notable exception is this superb three-disc box set, featuring every Stones

single of the '60s. Listening straight through, you trace the group's evolution from raggedy cover-band upstarts to rock gods. The inclusion of big hits never released on studio albums ("Honky Tonk Women") makes it essential; nearly all the two dozen B-sides are terrific too. **Download:** "Ruby Tuesday," "Honky Tonk Women," "Out of Time"



THE ROLLING STONES PART I: THE 1960s AND '70s

GREAT

THE ROLLING STONES, NOW!

ABKCO, 1965

★★★★



Fresh-faced English boys, belting blues ballads and chitlin'-circuit soul? It was an audacious, ridiculous notion, and on their fourth album, the Stones made it work. There's no doubting the reverence, but their

approach is idiosyncratic, a busy, clattering take on black American music. Alongside covers and blues sits the first successful Jagger-Richards original, "Heart of Stone," which mines soon-to-be-familiar territory. "There's been so many girls that I've known/I've made so many cry," sings Jagger, with relish.

Download: "Heart of Stone," "Mona (I Need You Baby)"

OUT OF OUR HEADS

ABKCO, 1965

★★★★



Richards was drifting off to sleep in a hotel when the most famous guitar riff in rock history popped into his head. That snarling 10-note figure, coupled with a witty lyric about sexual frustration and dumb TV commercials,

gave the Stones an anthem—"(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction," the chart-topping highlight of their fifth album—and established the chunky blues lick as their stock-in-trade. Jagger makes no secret of his ambitions, tackling songs by Sam Cooke, Otis Redding and Marvin Gaye, but he's more of a preening jive talker than a soul man.

Download: "The Last Time," "(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction"

DECEMBER'S CHILDREN (AND EVERYBODY'S)

ABKCO, 1965

★★★★



Their hair was getting longer, their ambitions growing, the drugs kicking in. Cover tunes still accounted for half the Stones' sixth LP, but the sound is thicker and weirder, with fuzzed-up guitars licking at the edges of Chuck

Berry's "Talkin' About You" and Jagger's vocals getting more deliciously garbled. The hit single "Get Off of My Cloud" pioneered a distinctly Stones-ish genre: the foul-tempered rant as catchy pop ditty.

Download: "She Said Yeah," "Get Off of My Cloud"

BETWEEN THE BUTTONS

ABKCO, 1967

★★★★



Their most genial album is a one-off experiment in folk-rock and Kinks-style Britpop. Bouncy piano and acoustic guitar keep the mood unusually buoyant; Jagger temporarily shelves his blues moves in favor of

brazen (and hilarious) Ray Davies and Bob Dylan imitations. The music-hall-cum-Dixieland ballad "Something Happened to Me Yesterday" may be the jauntiest ode to acid ever recorded.

Download: "Yesterday's Papers," "She Smiled Sweetly"

FLOWERS

ABKCO, 1967

★★★★



This collection of mid-'60s songs and outtakes includes several hits: "Ruby Tuesday" (Richards's stately tribute to a groupie ex), "Mother's Little Helper" (Jagger extends his woman-

bashing to desperate housewives) and "Let's Spend the Night Together" (the cheery come-on that nearly got the Stones banned from the *Ed Sullivan Show*). The best track, though, is less well-known: "Have You Seen Your Mother Baby, Standing in the Shadow," a squalling psychedelic masterpiece filled with feedback and brass.

Download: "Have You Seen Your Mother Baby, Standing in the Shadow," "Let's Spend the Night Together"

LET IT BLEED

ABKCO, 1969

★★★★



"I hope we're not too messianic/Or a trifle too Satanic," sings Jagger, but he's full of shit—no band loved playing rock gods, or devils, more than the Stones. Their thirteenth album has lots of both:

blues epics about serial killers, harrowing Vietnam War songs and the usual raunchy sex anthems surround "You Can't Always Get What You Want," a song about heroin that became an elegy for the recently departed Jones and for the '60s as a whole, inflated to Wagnerian bombast by the London Bach Choir. Next came their first U.S. tour in three years, climaxing with a notorious concert at Altamont, during which the Hell's Angels killed a black man in the crowd.

Download: "Gimme Shelter," "Let It Bleed"

CHECK IT OUT

ENGLAND'S NEWEST HITMAKERS

ABKCO, 1964

★★★



Charging through blues standards and Motown hits, the Stones established themselves on their debut as one helluva cover band. Hints of their sleazy genius could be heard in Jagger's scenery-chewing

vocals and in the glee with which they tear into "I Just Want to Make Love to You"—a theme they would revisit in, oh, several hundred more songs.

Download: "Not Fade Away," "Tell Me"

12x5

ABKCO, 1964

★★★



Released six months after the debut, it's another solid collection of cover songs, but Watts's crackling snare and Richards's crunchy guitar tilt the music further towards unbridled rock. "Time Is on

My Side," Jagger's best early ballad performance, was their first single to hit the American top 10.

Download: "Time Is on My Side"

GET YER YA-YA'S OUT!

ABKCO, 1970

★★★



No audio recording could capture the sensation of a Stones concert—Mick's catwalk posing must be seen to be believed—but that hasn't stopped them from churning out nine live albums. The finest,

recorded on their 1969 U.S. tour, is highlighted by a nine-minute "Midnight Rambler," featuring Jagger's most goofily grandiose blues shouting. Beware the muddy sound.

Download: "Stray Cat Blues"

GOAT'S HEAD SOUP

VIRGIN, 1973

★★★



In which the Stones ratchet up the sex and decadence quotient to the verge of self-parody: Ten slurred, sordid songs about drugs, "starfucker" groupies and the Devil (him again). Still, slashing wah-wah guitar

adds funky texture and they hit No. 1 with "Angie," a horndog love-ode to Jagger pal David Bowie's wife.

Download: "Doo Doo Doo Doo Doo (Heartbreaker)," "Angie"

BE CAREFUL

THEIR SATANIC MAJESTIES REQUEST

ABKCO, 1967

★★



It's hard to take this Summer of Love foray into psychedelic pop seriously: From the sub-Sgt. Pepper's cover art (Jagger glowering beneath a black wizard's hat) to the silly lyrics ("The grass grew high

and the feathers floated by"), it's clear the Stones jumped on the flower-power bandwagon for a lark—or because it was a good way to meet loose hippie chicks. The weak songwriting is slightly redeemed by some arresting arrangements, particularly on "2,000 Light Years From Home," whose synth freak-out was years ahead of its time.

Download: "She's a Rainbow," "2,000 Light Years from Home"

IT'S ONLY ROCK N' ROLL

VIRGIN, 1974

★★



In the '60s, the Stones invented rock stardom. In the mid-'70s—bogged down by Richards's drug problems and Jagger's outsized ego, exhausted after a decade of innovation and partying—they

invented rock-star lethargy and excess. Malaise is written all over this album: florid, heavy metal-style guitar runs, self-mythologizing paeans to rock and Jagger oversinging like a bad Jagger impersonator. There are some pretty ballads and a great cover of the Temptations' "Ain't Too Proud to Beg." Overall, though, it's smug and charmless.

Download: "Ain't Too Proud to Beg," "Time Waits for No One"

BLACK AND BLUE

VIRGIN, 1976

★★



A groove-heavy stopgap recorded while auditioning replacements for the departed Mick Taylor. (They settled on a Richards doppelganger, Ron Wood.) Not much in the way of

tunes, and not much rock & roll, either; you can hear the band fumbling towards the disco they'd soon perfect on *Some Girls*, but the meandering reggae jams should have been left with the roach clip on the studio floor.

Download: "Hand of Fate," "Fool to Cry"

FOR FANS ONLY

GOT LIVE IF YOU WANT IT!

ABKCO, 1966

★



MORE DEAD THAN LIVE

The sound mix is abominable, the band is often out of tune and this live album isn't even entirely live—it includes studio tracks that were overdubbed with the sound of cheering fans, a feat of

audio deception that not even Milli Vanilli attempted. The worst of the Stones' many dodgy concert records.

Download: "Lady Jane"

METAMORPHOSIS

ABKCO, 1975

★



A grab-bag mix of demos, outtakes and cast-offs spanning their first decade, this epitomizes the confusing, shoddy way their work has been anthologized. There's some fascinating stuff—early

sessions with Jimmy Page and John Paul Jones of Led Zeppelin are of interest to historians, and "I'd Much Rather Be With the Boys" is a fun doo-wop pastiche—but it's presented befuddlingly, with virtually no liner notes and no sense of chronology or pacing in the track sequencing. In short, it's a scam.

Download: "I'd Much Rather Be With the Boys"

MADE IN THE SHADE

ROLLING STONES, 1975

★



Surprise! It's another crappy Stones Best Of! There's no arguing with the music, which includes all the band's U.S. hits for the years '71-'74, plus three other tracks. But why

release a collection that cherry-picks 10 songs from just four albums? How much money do these guys need?

Download: "Bitch"

FURTHER LISTENING

JAMMING WITH EDWARD!

ROLLING STONES, 1972

★★



A loosey-goosey studio experiment, featuring three-fifths of the Stones (Jagger, Watts, Wyman) plus two studio aces (guitarist Ry Cooder and keyboardist Nicky Hopkins). If you need proof

that Keith's rhythm guitar is the Stones' essential ingredient, look no further.

Download: "The Boudoir Stomp"

FURTHER READING

THE TRUE ADVENTURES OF THE ROLLING STONES

BY STANLEY BOOTH

CHICAGO REVIEW PRESS, 2000

★★★★★

This behind-the-scenes account of the Stones' 1969 tour, first published in 1984, is regarded as a masterpiece of rock reportage. For the diehard fan, it's an intimate glimpse of the band at its roaring height; for the gossip-monger, there are tales of drug binges, sex romps and other backstage debauchery; and for history students, it's a vivid portrait of Altamont, Vietnam and late-'60s cultural turbulence. Booth's account of Brian Jones's death and its aftermath is the best thing ever written about that much-mythologized subject.



FURTHER VIEWING

THE ROLLING STONES ROCK N' ROLL CIRCUS

ABKCO, 1996

★★★★



Filed in 1968, this made-for-TV concert, starring the Stones, circus performers and bigshot friends (John Lennon, the Who, Marianne Faithfull) is an engrossing period piece. Fire-eaters jostle for airtime with bluesman Taj Mahal; Jethro Tull lip-sync; and the Stones eventually stam-pede through "Jumpin' Jack Flash," "Sympathy for the Devil" and other hits, with a swaggering Brian Jones stealing the show from Jagger.

COMING NEXT MONTH:

PART 2: SOLO ALBUMS, THE '80S AND BEYOND



Fiona Apple:
"Maybe the spiked
piano bench was
a bad idea."

STRANGE FRUIT

ONSTAGE, A GREAT SONGWRITER TURNS INTO OUR LADY OF THE PERPETUAL BREAKDOWN

FIONA APPLE

THE MOORE THEATRE
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

NOVEMBER 23, 2005

☆☆☆

FIONA APPLE BALANCES on her piano bench as if it were a log bobbing in the ocean after a shipwreck. Her slight body rocks and weaves—is this some of her famous crazy behavior? No, the 28-year-old rocker-chanteuse is just pumping the foot pedals, big black shoes peeping out from beneath her witchy geisha gown. She's riding the squall of "Get Him Back," her opening salvo on the

second show of the first tour she's done in five years. Yellow stagelights flash a warning as Apple hollers revenge. "Oh, he made my blood just burn," she growls, showing pleasure at the revenge of turning a bad relationship into good music.

Apple, pop's Contessa of Crisis, is still acting out the dance of id and superego that made her a star as a troubled teen in 1996. She has endured a decade of career strains, notably the shelving and complete re-recording of her third album, *Extraordinary Machine* (released October 4 to very strong reviews), and the resulting self-examination has

helped her refine the art of falling apart. Apple is now "good at being uncomfortable," as she sings in a breakneck acoustic version of her fine new disc's title track. But judging by this up-and-down show, she's still learning

APPLE TURNS NERVES INTO MELODRAMA.

how to stress the "good" over the mess.

Apple's stage fright isn't feigned. "I do get nervous about screwing up during a show, just because I tend to beat myself up about the littlest thing, and then I

have trouble regaining my confidence," she explains later via her tour manager's BlackBerry. Often, she turns those nerves into melodrama. And the capacity crowd of 1,400 reacts delightedly when Apple flashes the flummoxed grin of a treed cat and assures them that she's really freaked. (Tonight's distressed between-song patter, *Blender* discovers, is almost identical to what she said the previous night in Portland, Oregon.) Nearly any theatrical gesture makes her fans react as though Apple has just turned a triple axel in an Olympic figure-skating trial.

But it's a shame for her to be celebrated for her mood swings rather than for her extraordinary songs. She introduces her earliest hit, "Criminal," as "junk food," acknowledging her own growth away from blatant confession. Her newer songs add distancing wit to her youthful raw power—she has gone from a self-mutilating slam poet to a mordant song architect. And when she and her new band settle into her rhythmic crossword puzzles, you can feel her music evolving.

That lineup, which features two synth wizards, bass and drums but no guitar player, could take Apple somewhere entirely new or drag her down off her bobbing log. Rhythmically heavy and hairpin-sharp, the quintet recalls, of all elders, Tom Waits. There's a psychedelic vaudeville vibe to recast oldies like "Shadowboxer," and the sprung rhythms of the new "O' Sailor" galvanize. On these aggressive takes, Apple's voice sounds bloodier than it should only two nights into a tour, as she sprints to fit all of her words and changes into the song.

Standing languidly at center stage for the torchy "I Know," she nearly earns the Billie Holiday reference made by the blue flower in her hair, stretching vivid lines like "You can use my skin to bury secrets in" for full impact. Apple's not a jazz singer, but in trying on that role she lets the music

direct her emotions for once, rather than the other way around. At moments like this, Apple unveils the smarts her panic hides, and her prospects stretch out before her—the promise of an artist, not a drama queen. ANN POWERS

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Arguably, the least successful of Liz Taylor's marriages.



SORRY ENTERTAINER

THIS PEEK INSIDE THE MIND OF A TRULY TORTURED ARTIST MAY BE THE SCARIEST MOVIE OF THE YEAR BY STEVE KANDELL

THE DEVIL AND DANIEL JOHNSTON

DIRECTED BY Jeff Feuerzeig

STARRING Daniel Johnston

THOUGH NOMINALLY A music documentary in that it is, in fact, a documentary about a musician, *The Devil and Daniel Johnston* is no more tailored for rock aesthetes than *Crumb* was for comic book geeks or *Roger & Me* for unemployed auto workers. Its appeal comes not from the subject's legacy—Daniel Johnston's rickety self-recordings and Alfab-like voice may be an acquired taste—but from the story of his battle with manic depression and the remarkable raw material director Jeff Feuerzeig had at his disposal to tell it.

Before he became rock's most lovable basket case, Johnston was merely a precocious West Virginia kid who drew pictures and wrote songs instead of studying and taped his mom giving him grief about it. He dropped out of art school and, yes, ran away to join a carnival, then developed a following in Austin, Texas, performing

songs about God, ghosts and pinning for a classmate named Laurie. At a Butthole Surfers show in 1986, a 25-year-old Johnston took his first (but not last) hit of acid, turning his worsening manic depression into a full-on psychotic break, complete with ravings about demons. (In the movie, head Butthole Gibby Haynes denies any responsibility ... while getting his teeth drilled in a dentist's office.)

While committed to a mental hospital in 1988 for chasing an elderly woman out of her second-

story window—one of many disturbing incidents that included an attack on his former manager with a lead pipe, an arrest for spray painting Jesus-fish inside the Statue of Liberty and springing himself from Bellevue to play a gig at CBGB—Johnston recorded a one-hour radio special to promote his new album, which sold the Jersey-bred Feuerzeig, a fan of Johnston's since the mid-'80s, on making the troubled troubadour his muse. "He performed elaborate skits, playing all the characters in multiple voices,

improvising songs. It's legendary and is much, much scarier than Orson Welles's *War of the Worlds*," he recalls. "I wanted to make a film as good as that broadcast, showing all aspects of his personality—the highs, the lows, the comedy, the tragedy."

But it wasn't until seeing Johnston play a rare show in New York in 2001 that Feuerzeig finally mobilized. Johnston and his long-suffering parents, Bill and Mabel, with whom he was now living in Waller, Texas, offered the filmmaker unlimited access to count-



Johnston enjoys another Unhappy Meal.

THE BOOK OF DANIEL

DIRECTOR JEFF FEUERZEIG'S FIVE ESSENTIAL JOHNSTON SONGS

"TRUE LOVE WILL FIND YOU IN THE END"

That's Daniel's message, even when things are bad.

"SOME THINGS LAST A LONG TIME"

It's the movie's theme. It says so much: Like Dylan or Kerouac, some artists' work lasts a long time.

"HEY JOE"

Not the Hendrix one. It melts me.

"SPEEDING MOTORCYCLE"

His biggest "hit," this version was recorded on the phone with Yo La Tengo. I thought it was about Bob Dylan's motorcycle crash, but it's about a moped.

"LIKE A MONKEY IN THE ZOO"

He wrote about his illness a lot, and this song is one of the most direct: "Like a monkey in a zoo/It can happen to you."

less hours of footage and audio tapes on one condition: The movie could not gloss over any of the drug abuse that exacerbated Johnston's already fragile psyche.

And it doesn't, even at the risk of alienating viewers or threatening to exploit his illness for freak-show value. ("Daniel exploited it himself by writing about it," defends Feuerzeig. "I think that's brilliant.") Though he largely comes off as a teddy-bear savant, the hint of menace is never far from the surface. The most dramatic example of this provides the movie's rawest moment. Following a triumphant performance at the 1990 Austin Music Awards, Johnston boarded Bill's private plane for West Virginia, only to decide mid-flight that his father was possessed by Satan and thus must be forcibly relieved of the plane's yoke. Though no one was hurt in the ensuing crash, Bill bursts into tears recalling the story, as will all but the most jaded viewers. Decades of pent-up pain, unleashed in one cathartic blast ... and this was only the first day of interviewing.

Although contemporaries and friends testify to Johnston's difficult genius, his side of the story is represented almost entirely by the treasure trove of audio diaries and video footage spanning over 30 years. Johnston seems to have been rolling tape during every remotely significant event of his life, and many of the insignificant ones. "You couldn't make a film about John Lennon like this," Feuerzeig marvels. "Daniel did all the work; he just needed someone to finish the job. You're right there in his head with him." Safe to say, that's an unsettling place to spend an hour and a half.

And just as the highs in Johnston's life are invariably followed by sudden, demoralizing lows, the movie's happy-ish ending tacks on a disturbing coda that shows this glassy-eyed man-child dancing spastically in a stained T-shirt. "I wanted to end with the truth. He's not out of the woods," Feuerzeig says. Far from it—an incoherent Johnston was recently rushed to the hospital for possible lithium poisoning, and his future is an open, scary book. "What will happen to Daniel when his parents are gone? No one knows."

BLENDER APPROVED

The best movies of the past months



THE MATADOR

Brosnan swaps his license to kill for a license to whore-monger—and kill.



HOSTEL

Slovakia: nation of history, culture and secret houses of torture and death.



LAST GOOD MOVIE YOU SAW?

GINUWINE
R&B SINGER

"Hustle and Flow. I could relate because I also struggled to the top of the music business. It was a realistic portrayal of the struggle and the lifestyle."

THE EXCITED-O-METER

THIS MONTH'S NEW RELEASES, RANKED ACCORDING TO OUR HIGHLY SCIENTIFIC METHOD OF GUESSING



RUNNING SCARED

Pretty boy Paul Walker proves remarkably believable as a low-level Jersey hood in this tricky gangster movie. He also ends up remarkably less pretty after mobsters introduce his face to Mr. Fast-Traveling Hockey Puck.



NEIL YOUNG: HEART OF GOLD

Young performs new album *Prairie Wind* assisted by Emmylou Harris (but not, we're guessing, the jawa roadies from his previous in-concert opus, *Rust Never Sleeps*), directed by Jonathan Demme.



SYMPATHY FOR LADY VENGEANCE

Though not as good as *Oldboy*, this concluding entry in Chan-wook Park's revenge trilogy is, amazingly, even more extreme. Prepare for a lesbian prison scene you'll long to forget.



UNKNOWN WHITE MALE

Moviedom's fascination with memory loss continues in this documentary about an Englishman who wakes up on a New York subway train with no knowledge of how he got there—or, for that matter, of anything else.



FIREWALL

All baggy-faced security expert Harrison Ford wants is a quiet life. All Paul Bettany wants is for Ford to rob a bank—otherwise he will kill his family. Will their desires be reconciled in a non-violent fashion? Almost certainly not.



16 BLOCKS

Trouble ensues when New York cop Bruce Willis tries to escort motormouth witness Mos Def to a courthouse. Can anyone say *48 Hrs.* meets *Midnight Run* meets *The Gauntlet* meets (possibly) *March of the Penguins*?



BASIC INSTINCT 2

Sharon Stone returns to the role of bisexual underwear-hater Catherine Tramell, whom this sequel relocates to London. So expect a lot of characters saying "Crikey!" and "Tally-ho!" whenever she crosses her legs.



THE PINK PANTHER

If anyone can fill Peter Sellers's shoes, then it's Steve Martin. Which is what everyone said when he tried to fill Phil Silvers's shoes in the big-screen Sgt. *Bilko* remake. And that was absolute, how you say, *merde!*

VERY EXCITED

EXCITED-ISH

NOT SO MUCH

Silverman: "My eyes are up h... never mind."



Saget: Making the Olsen twins blush.



Gottfried: Pictured actual size.



Carlin: Like your grandpa, but intentionally funny.



GAG REFLEX

A DOCUMENTARY IN WHICH THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMEDIANS—AND CARROT TOP—DECONSTRUCT THE WORLD'S DIRTIEST DIRTY JOKE BY CLARK COLLIS

THE ARISTOCRATS

THINK FILM

★★★★

SO, THIS GUY walks into a theatrical agent's office and says his family performs a routine in which assorted vulgar sexual acts occur. When the agent asks what the act is called, the guy replies, "The Aristocrats!"

Yes, in the wrong hands—*Blender's*, for example—this can be a desperately unfunny joke. But, as filmmakers Penn Jillette (the tall, verbal half of Penn & Teller) and Paul Provenza make clear, what *is* funny is how comedians vary and improvise in their descriptions of the depraved acts leading up to

that clunker of a punchline.

A secret handshake of sorts among comics, the joke was considered unsuitable for public consumption until Gilbert Gottfried launched into a version at a televised roast of Hugh Hefner shortly after 9/11. *The Aristocrats* hails Gottfried's routine as both the moment when it became OK to laugh again and the definitive version of the joke. In fact, chuckle-wise, Gottfried's take is put in the shade by a number of the other performers featured here, including Bob Saget and Sarah Silverman. The latter deadpans that she was actually a member of the Aristocrats troupe and was raped by ancient New York talk show

host Joe Franklin, who, despite being another of the film's 100-odd interview subjects, has in real life threatened to sue. The AMC theater chain also declined to screen a film that includes mentions of vomit consumption, midget Nazis, incestuous fist-fucking and the heretofore verboten phrase "nigger cunts." But this extras-packed DVD, boasting yet more renditions of the joke from Terry Gilliam and Ron Jeremy, is more than just an offensive comedy. It's a meditative examination on the nature of comedy and about being offended. Moreover, it's the first film to prove that mimes can be funny—but only when they're pretending to sodomize a dog.

DIRECTOR'S CUT

ARISTOCRATS DIRECTOR PAUL PROVENZA ISN'T AFRAID TO WORK BLUE

DID ANYONE ACCIDENTALLY SEE THIS THINKING IT WAS THE ARISTOCRATS?

There was a sneak preview in Florida and a family asked, "Is this *The Aristocrats*?" The guy went, "Yeah," and they didn't walk out for 25 minutes. Six minutes in, George Carlin is talking about shitting in his wife's mouth, and yet they stay, thinking, "The cats are gonna sing any second now!" That's some serious faith in Disney.

HAS BOB SAGET ALWAYS BEEN SUCH A SICK BASTARD?

The joke about Saget is not that he's dirty. The joke is that he did *America's Funniest Home Videos* and *Full House*. It's hilarious that the entire country thinks he's this bland, milquetoast guy. He's a comedy Ted Bundy.

IS IT TRUE THAT YOUR VERSION OF THE JOKE IS SET IN ABU GHRAIB PRISON?

It's set in Abu Ghraib and it involves Terri Schiavo, because she's so vulnerable. I told it off-camera on the *Jimmy Kimmel Show* to the audience and they loved it. They may have been drunk.

WILL WE EVER SEE THE ARISTOCRATS ON TV?

We have a version where we bleeped out the profanity, and it's way funnier, because you're commenting on the fact that it's acceptable. We all know what the words are anyway.

DID ANYBODY SAY ANYTHING TOO DISGUSTING TO PUT IN THE MOVIE?

We're the only movie that has "nigger cunts"! Jesus, what do you people want?



WAITING ...

LIONS GATE

★★★

"If heterosexual men can't show their cocks to each other, what the hell are we doing here?" Precisely! Or, uh, perhaps not. Either way, there is an extraordinary amount of genital-related japey in a film that relocates *Clerks'* McJobber vibe to a fictional T.G.I. Friday's-type restaurant called *ShenaniganZ* [sic]. Although it betrays both its low budget and writer-director Rob McKittrick's obsession with gay jokes, *Waiting ...* still features a large amount of laugh-out-loud moments among its lessons on how to make testicles resemble Abraham Lincoln. Watch out, in particular, for the dinner scene between degenerate waiter Ryan Reynolds and his equally crazed but grammatically correct mom Wendie Malick (Reynolds: "Me and the hooker ...," Malick: "The hooker and I!").

SAW II

LIONS GATE

★★★

The people behind 2004's surprise hit and this franchise-coveting sequel haven't so much borrowed from *Seven* as carried big gore-drenched chunks of it away under their coats. But in these days of watered-down, formulaic horror, that's not necessarily a bad thing. The second entry finds cop Donnie Wahlberg attempting to outthink cancer-stricken serial killer the Jigsaw and save his son from a grisly death. Nothing, however, is exactly what it seems. (Except for the guy at the start who has to choose between gouging out his own eyeball and getting a skullful of rusty nails. That, the squeamish should be aware, is exactly what it seems.)

UNDISCOVERED

ARTISAN

★★★

Directed by video auteur Meiert Avis—previously responsible for clips by U2 and Bruce Springsteen—this tale of love among Hollywood Z-listers is predictably slick. It's also predictable in every other way, as rocker Steven Strait learns there are more important things than hanging out with supermodels. Expect sub-O.C. dialogue ("When are we gonna break out of the friends zone?") with only a surprisingly competent turn from Ashlee Simpson, as the male lead's best bud, and a few skateboarding bulldogs as compensation.



Death Cab:
Spit curls will
be huge in '06.

MOVING PICTURES

DEATH CAB FOR CUTIE ON THE DVDS THAT HELP ALLEVIATE TOUR-BUS TEDIUM

"Right now, we're all about *Arrested Development*, season two. And *Batman: The Movie*—not the Tim Burton one or the new one, but the Adam West/Burt Ward one from 1966. It's the campiest, the worst. They basically made an entire movie on the TV show's budget."

SAM PECKINPAH'S THE LEGENDARY WESTERNS COLLECTION

WARNER BROS.

★★★★★

Legend has it that more rounds were fired during the production of Sam Peckinpah's *The Wild Bunch* than during the actual Mexican Revolution that provides its setting. Yet, while the madman auteur is rightly credited with introducing lead-fuelled, slow-motion carnage to mainstream cinema, the quartet of Westerns featured here—*The Wild Bunch*, *Ride the High Country*, *Pat Garrett & Billy the Kid*, *The Ballad of Cable Hogue*—serve as a reminder that he was as obsessed with beauty as he was with bullets. Also available individually, the films all boast a creditable array

of extras, with the superlative two-disc *Wild Bunch* set offering outtakes, three documentaries and commentary by noted Peckinpahologists.

DOOM

UNIVERSAL

★★

This much-anticipated adaptation of the videogame that wasted a million man-hours is set in a future where huge guns are commonplace but, given the bewilderment of The Rock's team of soldiers when they start to be terrorized by fast-mutating predators, copies of *Aliens* and the *Resident Evil* movies are scarce. Incredibly, the film's lone original idea—aping the shooter's perspective of the original game for an extended sequence—actually makes the cartoonish action even more boring than it was before.

WEDDING CRASHERS

NEW LINE

★★★★

This obscene—and obscenely successful—Vince Vaughn and Owen Wilson—starring tale of sex-seeking nuptial invaders undoubtedly explains why a bunch of drunk fratboys unexpectedly turned up at your Grandpa Ernie's deathbed wedding to his gay nurse last summer, looking to score. But that, surely, is a small price to pay for seeing not just the central pair let off the leash but also Christopher Walken, a lusty Jane "Dr. Quinn" Seymour and Isla Fisher, the latter hilariously unhinged as Vaughn's clingy, ill-advised sexual conquest from hell. Bonus features on the DVD include a Vaughn/Wilson commentary and "A Crash Course in Wedding-Crashing." Good luck with that.

MUSIC DVDS

The Edge angrily insists to the crowd that he isn't bald.



ATOMIC ENERGY

CAN'T SHELL OUT \$170 AND YOUR FIRSTBORN SON TO SEE U2 LIVE? HERE'S A FAIR CONSOLATION PRIZE BY STEVE KANDELL

U2 VERTIGO 05: LIVE FROM CHICAGO

INTERSCOPE

★★★★

For the 17 people who haven't yet seen U2 on their tireless tour behind 2004's *How to Dismantle an Atomic Bomb*, this take-home version actually manages to be, if not even better than the real thing, an admirable facsimile. Filmed last May at the United Center, this is, as any U2 show must be, packed with sublime moments—an ecstatic crowd singalong during "Elevation" that makes even the stoic Larry Mullen Jr. smile, the closing benediction

"40"—as well as cringe-inducingly hokey ones (Bono chants the regrettable couplet, "Jesus, Jew/Muhammed, it's true" during a particularly histrionic "Sunday Bloody Sunday"). But most impressive is how this DVD manages to capture both the grandeur and the surprising intimacy of the arena spectacle, raising the bar for a medium that often traffics in tossed-off cash-ins. Though the release of a U2 live DVD may not in itself be momentous—the last tour yielded two—this one is worth the price for the medley of *Boy* songs at the beginning of the nearly three-hour set, more than for the cute-but-middling day-in-the-life bonus doc.

BLENDER APPROVED

THE BEST DVDS FROM THE PAST MONTHS



RED EYE

DREAMWORKS

Wes Craven's plane caper features thrills, chills and the best pen-oriented action sequence ever!



OFFICE SPACE

20TH CENTURY FOX

Yeah, we're gonna have to ask you to go ahead and come in to watch this on Saturday. 'Kay?

THE BEST OF THE REST

THE TOMORROW SHOW: PUNK & NEW WAVE SHOUT! FACTORY

★★★★

Leisure-suited chat host Tom Snyder was, to middle America, the Rosetta Stone of punk and new wave in the late '70s, deciphering the latest music and its implications for the uninitiated. Highlights include a sneering interview with a petulant John Lydon and Kim Fowley doing his best Hitler Youth impression. LAUREN HARRIS

THE HIVES TUSSELS IN BRUSSELS INTERSCOPE

★★★★

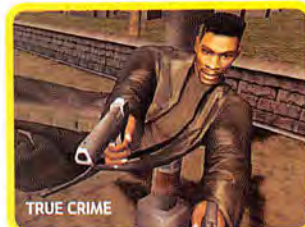
Filmed in Belgium in 2004, this high-voltage concert flick captures Howlin' Pelle Almqvist and his monochromatically dressed garage-punks in all their sweaty, Swedish glory. The eight trippy bonus videos are also cool; the tedious, tongue-in-cheek exposé about the band's mysterious early days, not so much. JOSH EELLS

THE ZEN OF SCREAMING LOUDMOUTH

★★★★

Melissa Cross, who resembles a PTA mom with a penchant for Eastern philosophies, teaches metal dudes to growl properly. Her instructive DVD includes lessons, demonstrations with members of H2O and Thursday and testimonials from Melissa Auf Der Maur and Andrew WK of how the pint-sized voice coach saved their throats. LAUREN HARRIS

Billy Joel: the videogame.



TRUE CRIME



DEAD OR ALIVE 4

TRUE CRIME: NEW YORK CITY

ACTIVISION, PS2, XBOX, GAMECUBE

☆☆☆

Laurence Fishburne, Redman and Traci Lords are among those who lend their well-known voices to this thugged-out shooter—but the real star of the game is the meticulously rendered map of Manhattan. Every street is labeled and major landmarks are intact, letting gamers sightsee as they drive, shoot and fight in a third-person action game that mixes *Grand Theft Auto* with *NYPD Blue*. Play by the rules and the bad guys have the advantage—cut too many corners and get labeled a rogue cop, which won't be good for anybody. Then stop at Katz's for a celebratory pastrami sandwich.

DEAD OR ALIVE 4

TECMO, XBOX 360

☆☆☆

Want to see scantily clad beauties fighting to the death without sneaking backstage at a cheerleading competition? Xbox 360 owners can crank up the HDTV signal to see every incredibly detailed inch of the fighting girls (and a few guys) of *Dead or Alive 4*. Warm-blooded male gamers everywhere claim that despite the T&A, they play DOA for the solid controls and a deep fighting system. And they just read you-know-what for the articles, too.

PROJECT GOTHAM RACING 3

MICROSOFT, XBOX 360

☆☆☆☆

Pure uncut hi-res beauty, mainlined directly from the Xbox 360 to the nearest big-screen display. *Project Gotham Racing 3* is one of those

ROAD RAGE

FOR ONCE, IRRESPONSIBLE AND LIFE-ENDANGERING DRIVING IS ACTUALLY ENCOURAGED BY LIBE GOAD

FULL AUTO

SEGA, XBOX 360

☆☆☆☆

REMEMBER THAT GUY in Colorado a couple of years ago who built a fortified tank and bulldozed his whole town? Not to condone such behavior, and it's awful that people were hurt and property destroyed, but ... admit it, that kinda sounds like fun. Equally cathartic and less prosecutable is this combat racer, in which you take the wheel of an armored vehicle

and let loose on a city where everything can be destroyed. These badass rides, complete with flashy rims and grenade launchers, compete for bragging rights that come from downing a giant building with a single shot.

It's easy to forget that this is a race, too, so blowing across the finish line first must be accomplished by any means necessary. Riders can blow away the competition with an extensive arsenal or go all hippy-dippy peacenik and earn multiple speed boosts by

destroying inanimate objects. Also, if you zig when you should have zagged, you have the handy ability to rewind time and try again, a skill that would come in handy in more than few real-life situations.

Car geeks shouldn't expect to see any real-life licensed rides, as the uptight auto industry doesn't want you to see how their precious wheels look after a short-range missile attack. But the make-believe cars' smooth handling and pimped-out designs add to the *Mad Max* meets *Cannonball Run* vibe.

GIZMO OF THE MONTH

RELIVE YOUR MISSPENT YOUTH WITH THE BIGGAMES HOME VIDEO ARCADE. NO QUARTERS REQUIRED

➔ It might not cure a case of Pac-Man fever, but this affordable stand-up arcade unit (\$355) comes stocked with 12 classic games like *Defender*, *Joust* and the perennial swiller thriller, *Rootbeer Tapper*, not seen since the days of Reaganomics. When the retro gaming gets stale, plug a PlayStation or Xbox into the extra A/V jacks for some upright

twenty-first-century action. The cabinet stands a little shorter than a full-size arcade box, checking in at a Tom Cruise-like five-foot-two. Sure, most of these games could be found on the web, but there's something satisfying about making up for all the allowance you spent trying to beat the high score. Plus, standing up is the next best thing to exercise.



Meet the anti-PSP.



titles gamers use to show off the wonders of next-gen gaming to disbelieving family and friends. Race real-life cars from Ferraris to Fords in real-life cities like New York, Tokyo and London, against other real-life gamers via Xbox Live. Easily the best-looking driving game ever.

HITMAN: BLOOD MONEY

EIDOS, PC, XBOX, PS2

★★★

More Kojak than Costanza, the bald and brooding antihero of the incredibly violent *Hitman* series is back for more murder-for-hire action. Instead of blazing guns, Agent 47 relies on ninja-like stealth and quick costume changes to get close enough to his target, then proceeds to dispatch the bad guys with guns, knives, explosives and other inventive means of death-dealing. This time around, 47's rep will carry over between missions. So if he gets spotted, his mug will be all over the papers, making his next mission even more dangerous than a back-alley brawl with Joe Lieberman.

KAMEO: ELEMENTS OF POWER

MICROSOFT, XBOX 360

★★★★

Pity poor Kameo. She's an easy-on-the-eyes fairy, but to save her family from evil trolls, she has to transform into an animal spirit, from a rolling armadillo to a punch-happy boxing weed. It may sound like some Saturday morning Japanese cartoon, but this third-person 3D action/platform game owes more to *Super Mario* than *Pokémon*.

MVP 06 NCAA BASEBALL

EA SPORTS, PS2, XBOX, GAMECUBE

★★★

EA's first swing at an NCAA franchise offers custom ballparks and a highly customizable create-a-player option, along with online play and a dynasty mode to take one of America's top colleges all the way. Need more college cred? Extra special care was taken to get the crack of that aluminum bat to sound just right.

Sean Paul: "I said don't fence me in!"



GEEH FILES

AFTER THE COKE AND WHORES, VIDEOGAMES ARE MUST-HAVES FOR ANY SELF-RESPECTING MUSICIAN. THIS MONTH, DANCEHALL STAR **SEAN PAUL** LETS HIS DWEEB FLAG FLY.

LAST GOOD GAMES PLAYED

SSX on Tour, *Grand Theft Auto* and the NBA game with the Miami team from last year with Shaq, all on PSP, which is the most brilliant invention in the world. I got a whole bag full of games and movies. I can take it to the gym and play basketball on the treadmill. I was reading books for a while, but the PSP is hot.

GAMING DRUG OF CHOICE

I smoke weed all the time. If I'm playing, I gotta have the spliff in my mouth while I sit there in my holey shorts. The ash from the spliff falls onto my shorts when I'm trying to complete a mission in *Grand Theft Auto*. All my shorts are holey now!

IN-STUDIO GAMING HABITS

Producers always have videogames in their studios, and they want to sit down and play when I want to record. I used to say, "Y'all play too many fuckin' games," and they'd be like, "Go and write your lyrics." When you

have a system hooked up to the TV, you can't do shit. Again, that's why the PSP is better for my lifestyle.

A SEAN PAUL GAME WOULD BE LIKE ...

The Sean Paul game would feature me and my crew, and all of us grow our own herb. Once you pick the plants, you get more points, you write better lyrics and your song goes to No. 1 on the *Billboard* chart. When you're on tour and you need more energy, you go backstage and roll another spliff and drink a shot of Hennessy and *woop, woop, woop!* That's the sound of the crowd going crazy.

POST-SHOW PASTIME: GAMES OR GROUPIES?

It depends on my mood, most definitely. If I want to feel more like a human instead of the sexual monster that I am, then I'm going to chill out with a game. But that was back in the day—I'm in a relationship now. *GABE SORIA*

BLENDER APPROVED

THE BEST GAMES FROM THE PAST MONTHS



GRAND THEFT AUTO: LIBERTY CITY STORIES

ROCKSTAR, PSP

Use the PSP to play a carjacking game while riding in a real car!



METROID PRIME PINBALL

NINTENDO, DS

When not killing creepy aliens, '80s game icon Samus sure plays a mean pinball.

THE 28-YEAR-OLD FORMER BRITISH ARMY CAPTAIN IS USUALLY DRUNK ON WEEKENDS, HAS AN APPALLING NICKNAME AND HIS MOTHER THINKS HE LOOKS LIKE TOM CRUISE. SO MAYBE MOM CAN HELP US ANSWER THE QUESTION ...

BY ROB TANNENBAUM
PHOTOGRAPH BY LEGO

WHO DOES JAMES BLUNT THINK HE IS?

THAT'S NOT A PROPER SELF-PORTRAIT, JAMES. IT'S JUST A PAIR OF EYES. WHY NOT JUST YOUR NOSE?
You look at someone's eyes to work out what kind of person they are, whether they're gentle or aggressive, whether they're telling the truth or lying. The nose tells you very little, other than if they have a big coke problem.

DO WE NEED TO WORRY ABOUT YOU TELLING US THE TRUTH TODAY?
I have lied in many interviews, just to keep them entertaining.

LIKE WHEN YOU CLAIMED TO BE DATING ANGELINA JOLIE AND TO HAVE A 16-INCH PENIS?

Those were *not* lies, I swear it.

IT'S FRIDAY AT 11 P.M. WHERE ARE YOU?

I'm in a bar. And I'm drunk.

WHAT ARE YOU DRINKING?

Pretty much anything alcoholic. I suppose that's a British cliché, isn't it? You think we drink a lot. And I've already confirmed that.

IS DRINKING THE MOST BRITISH THING ABOUT YOU?

No. Brits are usually uptight and emotionally stunted. I'd daresay that I'm both.

WHAT WAS YOUR NICKNAME AT SCHOOL?

Anything that rhymes with Blunt.

OH, DEAR. I HADN'T THOUGHT OF THAT.

Well you're the last person on the planet. In Britain, the closer you are to someone, the more offensive you act with them.

SO YOUR BEST FRIENDS CALL YOU BLUNT THE CUNT?

How dare you! I'm leaving.

ARE YOU EVER A JIMBO, OR ALWAYS A JAMES?

My parents call me Jimmy. They've never called me Cunt.

AT LEAST NOT TO YOUR FACE. IF WE DRUG-TESTED YOU, WHAT WOULD WE FIND?

A whole array of things. I've been on a lot of mercury recently, which is good shit. But not for kids. Kids, don't do mercury.

WHAT'S THE QUESTION YOU'RE MOST TIRED OF BEING ASKED?

I get asked a lot about the army, and whether it's strange to go from the army to music. I find it strange that humans can't just accept that we are flexible and can do many jobs. Aren't there other jobs you could turn to?

NO, THIS IS PRETTY MUCH IT FOR ME. WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE CURSE WORD, AND CAN YOU USE IT IN A SENTENCE?

"I'd fuck me." [Laughs] It's from *Silence of the Lambs*, when he's looking at himself in the mirror, dressed peculiarly.

DO YOU USE THAT PHRASE OFTEN?
Sadly, far too often.

WHAT'S A HABIT OF YOURS THAT PEOPLE FIND ANNOYING?

I am overly punctual. I cannot abide tardiness. We are renowned across the world for being the most punctual band in rock & roll.

WELL, IF YOU CAN'T BE THE BEST—
Be the most punctual. At least we're the most something.

HAVE YOU EVER VIDEOTAPED YOURSELF HAVING SEX?

No. But! Ooh, this is dodgy. At university, I was in a student movie and had a sex scene. I met this girl in a café, then we met again, and lights, camera, action, away we went.

WERE YOU NAKED?

I'm not going to give more detail, but yeah.

WHOM DO PEOPLE SAY YOU LOOK LIKE?

My mother tells me that I look like Tom Cruise. But moms lie. No one else sees the resemblance.

DOES SHE REALLY SAY THAT, OR IS THIS ONE OF YOUR LIES?

I don't know if it's a good thing, to claim you look like Tom Cruise. I would be remarkably stupid to make that up.

WHAT DO PEOPLE WHO DON'T LIKE YOU SAY ABOUT YOU?

They usually say that I'm posh. I speak a certain way, with a certain accent.

YOU DO HAVE AN EDUCATED ACCENT.

Which is misleading, because I'm as thick as pig shit. [Laughs] I just have the accent.

WILL HISTORY REMEMBER YOU?

I've never met history. But I'm sure once I've met him, he will remember me. [BLENDER]

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